UNITED
NATIONS

CRC

Convention on the
Rights of the Child

Distr.
GENERAL

CRC/C/11/Add.24
23 July 2001

Original: ENGLISH

COMMITTEE ON THE RIGHTS OF THE CHILD

CONSIDERATION OF REPORTS SUBMITTED BY STATES PARTIES UNDER ARTICLE 44 OF THE CONVENTION

Initial reports of States parties due in 1994

BAHRAIN

[Original: Arabic]

GE.01-43802 (E) 040901

CONTENTS

		Paragraphs	Page
Introduction		1 - 2	5
Part I (General)			
A.	Brief outline of the State	3 - 24	5
B.	General political framework	25 - 31	8
C.	The Bahraini legal system and the protection accorded to rights and freedoms	32 - 35	9
D.	The legal status of the Convention on the Rights of the Child under the legal system of the State of Bahrain	36 - 37	10
E.	Remedies and measures to strengthen and protect the rights recognized in the Convention	38 - 42	10
F.	The State of Bahrain's endeavours to disseminate, propagate and make known the provisions of the Convention	43 - 50	11
Part II			
A.	General measures of implementation	51 - 60	13
B.	Definition of the child	61 - 74	15
C.	General principles	75 - 89	17
	Non-discrimination (art. 2)	75 - 76	17
	Best interests of the child (art. 3)	77 - 83	18
	The right to life, survival and development (art. 6)	84 - 85	19
	Respect for the views of the child (art. 12)	86 - 89	19

CONTENTS (continued)

		Paragraphs	Page
D.	Civil rights and freedoms	90 - 118	19
	Name and nationality (art. 7)	90 - 93	19
	Preservation of identity (art. 8)	94 - 97	20
	Freedom of expression (art. 13)	98 - 99	21
	Freedom of thought, conscience and religion (art. 14)	100 - 101	21
	Freedom of association and of peaceful assembly (art. 15)	102 - 107	21
	Protection of privacy (art. 16)	108	22
	Access to appropriate information (art. 17)	109 - 112	22
	The right not to be subjected to torture or other cruel, inhuman or degrading treatment or punishment (art. 37 (a))	113 - 118	23
E.	Family environment and alternative care	119 - 181	24
	Parental guidance (art. 5)	119 - 120	24
	Parental responsibilities (art. 18, paras. 1-2)	121 - 125	24
	Separation from parents (art. 9)	126 - 129	25
	Family reunification (art. 10)	130	26
	Illicit transfer and non-return (art. 11)	131 - 133	26
	Recovery of maintenance for the child (art. 27, para. 4)	134 - 139	26
	Children deprived of a family environment (art. 20)	140 - 172	27
	Adoption (art. 21)	173	33

CONTENTS (continued)

		Paragraphs	Page
	Periodic review of placement (art. 25)	174 - 175	33
	Abuse and neglect (art. 19), including physical and psychological recovery and social reintegration (art. 39)	176 - 181	33
F.	Basic health and welfare	182 - 238	35
	Health and health services (art. 24)	182 - 185	35
	Survival and development (art. 6, para. 2)	186 - 216	36
	Disabled children (art. 23)	217 - 238	49
	Social security and childcare services and facilities (arts. 26 and 18, para. 3)	239	54
	Standard of living (art. 27, paras. 1-3)	240 - 248	54
G.	Education, leisure and cultural activities	249 - 299	56
	Education, including vocational training and guidance (art. 28)	239 - 271	56
	Aims of education (art. 29)	272 - 283	61
	Leisure, recreation and cultural activities (art. 31)	284 - 299	66
H.	Special protection measures	300 - 339	71
	Children in situations of emergency	300 - 304	71
	Children in conflict with the law	305 - 321	71
	Children in situations of exploitation, including physical and psychological recovery and social reintegration	322 - 339	75
	Conclusion	340 - 341	78
	List of annexes*		79

* The annexes are available for consultation in the files of the secretariat.

Introduction

1. The State of Bahrain acceded to the Convention on the Rights of the Child, which was adopted by the General Assembly of the United Nations on 20 November 1989, under the terms of Amiral Decree No. 16 of 1991, which was published in the Official Gazette on 4 September 1991, and the Convention entered into force in the State of Bahrain on 14 March 1992. In accordance with the provisions of article 44, paragraph 1, of the Convention, all States parties have an obligation to submit periodic reports on the measures they have adopted which give effect to the rights recognized therein and on the progress made on the enjoyment of those rights. The State of Bahrain has the honour to submit the following report, constituting its initial and second reports, to the Committee on the Rights of the Child.

2. This report has been prepared jointly by the public and private bodies concerned, in collaboration with the National Committee on Childhood.

PART I

General

A. Brief outline of the State

1. Description of the State of Bahrain

3. The vast majority of Bahrainis are of Arab origin and can trace their descent partly from the successive tribal migrations from the Arabian Peninsula during or after the pre-Islamic period. Their historical roots go back to the Dilmun civilization during the pre-Christian era. As a result of their geographical location on the ancient international trade route, they intermixed with a number of migrants from neighbouring countries who settled among them.

4. The State of Bahrain consists of an archipelago of islands in the shallow waters of the central Arabian Gulf. This archipelago comprises 36 islands covering a total area of 709.5 km^2. The largest island is the island of Bahrain, covering an area of 589.83 km^2, which contains the capital Manama and is linked by causeways to neighbouring islands such as Muharraq, Sitra, Umm Na'san and Nabih Salih. The main island is also linked by a causeway to the Kingdom of Saudi Arabia. The other large islands of the Bahrain archipelago include Hawar, situated at a distance of 25 km to the south-east of the main island and covering an area of about 52 km^2. In order to meet the needs of the population, a further area of about 33 km^2 was reclaimed from the sea through landfill between 1976 and 1996. In 1998, 13.3 per cent of the existing land was used for housing purposes, 5.9 per cent for agriculture, 9.3 per cent for industry and commerce, 5.9 per cent for the cultural heritage and tourism and 16.5 per cent for Bahrain's gas and petroleum.

2. Demographic indicators

5. According to the 1991 census, Bahrain's population amounted to 508,037 persons of whom 294,346 were male (57.9 per cent) and 213,691 female (42.1 per cent). The proportion of non-Bahrainis amounted to 36.4 per cent, of whom 70.9 per cent were male and 29.1 per cent female.

6. According to the 1998 estimates, the population of Bahrain had increased to 642,972 persons, of whom 376,210 were male (58.4 per cent) and 266,762 female (41.6 per cent).

7. In 1991, the number of foreigners residing in the State of Bahrain, disaggregated by ethnic group and duration of residence, amounted to 184,732 persons (see annex 1)

8. In the same year, the non-Bahraini population was estimated at 251,953 persons (38.8 per cent of the total population), of whom 178,523 were male (70.9 per cent) and 73,430 female (29.1 per cent).

9. In 1998, the population density was estimated at 906 persons per km^2.

10. The age structure of the Bahraini and non-Bahraini population in 1998 is shown in annex 2. The population distribution by gender was as follows:

Total Bahraini males:	197,687
Total Bahraini females:	193,332
Total non-Bahraini males:	178,523
Total non-Bahraini females:	73,430

11. The urban/rural ratio is high in all areas of Bahrain in view of the expansion and development of the new towns. The urban proportion of the population amounted to 88.4 per cent in 1991, as compared with 80.7 per cent in 1981. The proportion of housing units connected to public utilities (water, electricity and public sewage) amounted to 99.7 per cent in 1991.

12. It is noteworthy that, in 1998, the overall fertility rate per woman amounted to 3.5 children for Bahraini women and 1.4 children for non-Bahraini women (see annex 3).

13. In 1998, the infant mortality rate amounted to 8.1 per 1,000 births among Bahrainis and 10.2 per 1,000 births among non-Bahrainis (see annex 3).

14. In 1998, life expectancy at birth stood at 70.55 for males and 72.59 for females among Bahrainis and 76.05 for males and 75.96 for females among non-Bahrainis.

15. The physician/population ratio amounted to 896 persons per physician in 1998, as compared with 2,679 in 1969 and 3,921 in 1960.

3. The economic situation

16. Bahrain has adopted financial and economic policies based on the principle of a free economy and market mechanisms. The State is endeavouring to diversify its sources of income, to create an appropriate investment environment that will attract further local, Arab and foreign investments, and to develop the legislation and procedures relating to those activities. These policies have been highly successful insofar as GDP at current prices rose from 1,289.4 million Bahraini dinars in 1987 to 2,387.4 million dinars in 1997. Hence, the economic growth rate rose to 6.4 per cent per year at current prices and 5.5 per cent at fixed prices during the period from 1988 to 1997 (6.1 per cent in 1996) and the per capita share of GNP rose from 2,351.9 dinars in 1987 to 3,040.7 dinars in 1997. Bahrain has also succeeded in ensuring a decent life for its citizens by improving their overall living conditions through the provision of all the principal utilities and social services. The per capita share of government expenditure rose from 994.4 dinars in 1987 to 1,134.1 dinars in 1997. Expenditure on educational services per student rose from 113.6 dinars in 1987 to 131.7 dinars in 1997 and the per capita share of government expenditure on health services rose from 69 dinars in 1987 to 89.9 dinars in 1997. The policy of diversifying the sources of income likewise succeeded in reducing the petroleum sector's contribution to GDP from 32 per cent in 1975 to 18.5 per cent in 1997. The economic growth that Bahrain has achieved as a result of its economic policies undoubtedly heralds a promising future for the Bahraini economy, as attested by the international economic institutions concerned.

17. International reports indicate that the State of Bahrain has maintained a public budgetary deficit of less than 3 per cent and actually achieved a budgetary surplus in 1996 and 1997. In addition, the State of Bahrain was one of the three States that achieved the lowest rate of inflation, amounting to 0.2 per cent in 1996, 1.7 per cent in 1997 and 0.4 per cent in 1998.

Development of GDP and GNP at current prices and per capita share thereof

18. It is noteworthy that Bahrain took third place after Hong Kong and Singapore in the American Heritage Foundation's Index of Economic Freedom, which is based on a number of criteria including, in particular, financial, monetary and trade policies, government consumption of production, capital flows, foreign investments and intellectual property rights.

19. According to a report published by the United Nations Development Programme (Human Development Report 1997), for the fourth consecutive year Bahrain ranked first among the Arab States and forty-third among 174 States on the basis of the criterion of human development.

4. Manpower

20. In accordance with article 13 of the Constitution, work is an obligation and a right of every citizen and the State undertakes to provide employment opportunities on equitable conditions. Bahrain is a country that needs to import labour in order to implement its investment and development plans.

21. The rate of unemployment amounts to 6.3 per cent of Bahrain's total labour force, which comprised about 226,448 workers according to the census of 1991 and 294,734 workers

according to the estimates of the Central Statistical Bureau in 1998. The State is endeavouring to overcome the problem of unemployment through numerous measures at the governmental and private levels to create new employment opportunities, make existing employment opportunities more widely known and promote vocational training, etc.

22. Bahraini women are contributing to social progress through the role that they are playing in the care and upbringing of the young generation, in addition to their contribution to economic activity and social development. In 1998, Bahraini working women constituted 19 per cent of the total national labour force, while non-Bahraini working women constituted 16 per cent of the total immigrant labour force (see annex 4).

5. Religion

23. Article 2 of the Constitution stipulates that the religion of the State is Islam. Article 22 further stipulates that freedom of conscience is absolute and that the State guarantees the inviolability of places of worship as well as freedom to engage in religious observances and to participate in religious processions and meetings in accordance with the customs observed in the country.

Statistical indicators

24. According to the data collected during the 1991 census, the population distribution by religion was as follows:

Muslims (415,448 persons):	81.8 per cent
Christians (43,237 persons):	8.5 per cent
Other religions (48,352 persons):	9.7 per cent

B. General political framework

25. Bahrain is an independent Arab State. The religion of the State is Islam and the Islamic Shari'a is the principal source of its legislation. It became a member of the United Nations in 1971.

26. The rulership of Bahrain is hereditary and its system of government is democratic, sovereignty being vested in the people. Citizens have the right to participate in public affairs and enjoy their constitutionally recognized public rights and freedoms in the legally prescribed manner.

27. The system of government and the State's legislative, executive and judicial authorities are regulated by the Constitution. The Amir, who is the Head of State, shares the executive authority with the Cabinet and Ministers and the judgements of the judicial authority are handed down in his name, in accordance with the provisions of the Constitution.

28. In keeping with its customs and traditions and its Islamic faith, the State of Bahrain has adopted the consultative system and, accordingly, has established a Consultative Council representing all the population groups and all the country's sectors. This Consultative Council

consists of 40 members appointed by His Highness the Amir from among knowledgeable persons of sound judgement and good counsel. The Council's function is to express an opinion on all aspects of the Government's activities, to propose legislation and to advise the Government on important issues. Its members enjoy parliamentary immunity throughout their term in office and are completely free to express their opinions on matters that are raised or discussed in the Council. The State is in the process of developing a system under which membership of the Consultative Council will be elective and will include women.

29. Article 101 of the Constitution stipulates that: "The honour of the judiciary and the integrity and impartiality of judges constitute the basis of government and a guarantee of rights and freedoms. In their administration of justice, judges shall be subject to no other authority and no interference in the course of justice shall be permitted under any circumstances. The law shall guarantee the independence of the judiciary and shall define the immunities of judges and the regulations by which they are governed".

30. The State is divided administratively into four governorates. The organizational structure of the local administration has been developed and a study is currently being conducted on ways to make the municipal councils elective.

31. The State of Bahrain is a member of the League of Arab States and also of the Gulf Cooperation Council, the Organization of the Islamic Conference and the United Nations.

C. The Bahraini legal system and the protection accorded to rights and freedoms

32. The document proclaiming the Bahraini Constitution of 1973 defined the cornerstones of the State's general policy on issues concerning the international and local communities by stipulating that the State aspired to a future based on consultation and justice in which freedom and equality would be guaranteed and fraternity and social solidarity would be consolidated.

33. With regard to the role that the State of Bahrain should play at the international level in its capacity as a member of the international community, that document also indicated that Bahrain should uphold humanitarian values and make an effective contribution to regional and international endeavours to secure the welfare of mankind as a whole, promote freedom and justice throughout the world and safeguard international peace and security.

34. These basic provisions and principles set forth in that document promulgated in December 1973 were confirmed in the text of the Constitution itself, in which public rights and freedoms were emphasized.

35. All the national laws and legislation concerning all aspects of public rights and freedoms are in conformity with the Constitution. Detailed reference will be made to some of these laws in part II concerning the substantive provisions of the Convention.

D. The legal status of the Convention on the Rights of the Child under the legal system of the State of Bahrain

36. With regard to the legal status of the provisions of international treaties and conventions, article 37 of the Constitution stipulates that a treaty shall acquire the force of law after its conclusion, ratification and publication in the Official Gazette, which endows it with the same legal status as any of the country's other laws.

37. These treaties and conventions are published in the country's Arabic-language Official Gazette, which is distributed among the government agencies and can be obtained by citizens and residents at a nominal price. Under the terms of Decree No. 16 of 1991, the Convention on the Rights of the Child was published in the Official Gazette No. 1971 on Wednesday, 4 September 1991. Having thus become part of Bahraini law, the provisions of the Convention can be invoked before the national courts.

E. Remedies and measures to strengthen and protect the rights recognized in the Convention

38. Legal redress is one of the public rights that the Constitution guarantees to all. The judicial authority, which is one of the State's three authorities, is dealt with in articles 101-103 of the Bahraini Constitution, which stipulate that service in the judiciary is an honour, that its integrity constitutes the basis of government and a safeguard of rights and freedoms, and that judges are subject to no other authority. The law guarantees the independence of judges and provides safeguards for the administration of justice, in which no interference is permitted. The Constitution further stipulates that court hearings should be public and may be held in camera only in the exceptional circumstances specified by law.

39. Legislative Decree No. 13 of 1971, concerning the organization of the judiciary, provided for the independence of the judiciary and defined the manner of appointment and the immunities of judges. It made provision for three levels of courts: courts of first instance (lower and higher courts and courts of enforcement); higher civil courts of appeal; and the Court of Cassation. The courts are divided into two categories: the civil courts, which are competent to hear civil and criminal cases, and the Shari'a courts, which adjudicate on matters of personal status. The Shari'a courts, which are subdivided into Sunni and Jaafari branches, are competent to hear personal status disputes relating to marriage, divorce, inheritance and child custody, etc. Within the framework of respect for religious freedom, which is guaranteed in the Constitution, the courts adjudicate on matters of personal status in accordance with the rules of the Islamic school of law to which the plaintiff belongs. Disputes between Muslims in this regard are heard by the Shari'a courts, while disputes between members of other religions are heard by the civil courts.

40. It should be noted that the Court of Cassation has ruled that the civil courts are competent to hear petitions against administrative decisions.

41. Since the Convention has become part of the country's law and, as such, is binding on all the authorities, any failure to comply therewith constitutes a breach of the law and entails

criminal responsibility on the part of the offender. It also entails liability under the terms of the Civil Code promulgated in 1970 and, in all cases, the person responsible is held liable for any damages to which his fault might give rise.

42. Any citizen can also lodge a complaint against administrative authorities with their senior officials, including the competent Ministers, and, in accordance with the time-honoured customs and traditions, any Bahraini citizen can submit a complaint in person to His Highness the Amir, His Highness the Prime Minister or His Highness the Crown Prince during the weekly audiences at which they receive citizens and others.

F. The State of Bahrain's endeavours to disseminate, propagate and make known the provisions of the Convention

43. The National Committee on Childhood, in collaboration and coordination with the Children's Department of the Public Authority for Youth and Sport and with the Ministries, bodies and private associations concerned, is making various endeavours to make the rights of the child more widely known and to support activities relating thereto, including the promotion of public awareness concerning the Convention on the Rights of the Child and the reports on its implementation. Numerous public symposia and radio and televised discussion groups were organized, before and after the ratification of the Convention, with the participation of all the public and private sectors of society in order to shed light on the provisions of the Convention and compare them with the legislation in force in the State of Bahrain. All the bodies concerned with children have also been eager to discuss the question of the rights of the child at every symposium or conference held on this topic. In addition, a number of children's writing and painting competitions have been held on the subject in order to make children more familiar with the Convention and its aims and inform them of their rights. The State is also encouraging participation by children in the conferences and symposia that are held in and outside Bahrain to discuss the Convention and make it more widely known.

44. In the private sector, the non-governmental associations operating in various fields in Bahrain play an important role, within their respective fields of activity and in collaboration with the governmental authorities, in promoting greater public awareness of the provisions of international human rights instruments, including the Convention on the Rights of the Child, by disseminating them among their members in order to make it easy for their members to familiarize themselves with the provisions and principles contained in those instruments, thereby making them more aware of their rights and obligations arising therefrom.

45. The Human Rights Committee established by the Consultative Council is studying the human rights-related legislation and regulations in force in the State of Bahrain with a view to proposing appropriate amendments thereto and helping the official agencies concerned to promote greater awareness of human rights.

46. The information media are playing an active role in furthering the aims of the Convention by holding televised discussion groups and interviews with the officials concerned in order to make the provisions of the Convention more clearly understood. The audio-visual information media are also mobilizing public support for the projects of Ministries and public and private institutions and are providing them with every facility to make their objectives

known to all social sectors. In fact, all branches of the audio-visual information media are committed to the dissemination and consolidation of the humanitarian values on which Bahraini society is based and, in particular, are encouraging fraternity and cooperation among all sections of society and promoting social solidarity in order to achieve the prosperous society to which the State of Bahrain is aspiring.

47. In the education sector, all educational institutions, systems and programmes are complying with the constitutional provisions that guarantee rights and freedoms and are also encouraging a spirit of cooperation and good relations in order to establish an appropriate social structure for the ongoing development plans that the State of Bahrain is pursuing.

48. At the international and regional levels, the Government of the State of Bahrain has consistently supported and endorsed all the endeavours made to protect the rights of the child and of the family. For example, it endorsed the World Declaration adopted by the World Summit for Children, as well as the Plan of Action for its implementation, and prepared a National Plan for Children in accordance with the principles of that Declaration and the Plan of Action. It also adopted the Arab Plan for Children. It celebrates the International Day of the Child and participates in numerous Arab and international conferences on this subject.

49. In this connection, it should be noted that the State of Bahrain has acceded to the following conventions:

(i) The Convention on the Prevention and Punishment of the Crime of Genocide of 9 December 1948, to which Bahrain acceded under the terms of Decree No. 4 of 1990;

(ii) The Slavery Convention of 25 September 1926, as amended by the Protocol drawn up in 1953, and the supplementary Convention on the Abolition of Slavery, the Slave Trade, and Institutions and Practices Similar to Slavery of 1956, to which Bahrain acceded under the terms of Decree No. 7 of 1990;

(iii) The International Convention on the Elimination of All Forms of Racial Discrimination of 1965, to which Bahrain acceded under the terms of Decree No. 8 of 1990;

(iv) The International Convention on the Suppression and Punishment of the Crime of Apartheid of 1973, to which Bahrain acceded under the terms of Decree No. 8 of 1990;

(v) .The Convention against Torture and Other Cruel, Inhuman or Degrading Treatment or Punishment, adopted by the General Assembly of the United Nations on 10 December 1984, to which Bahrain acceded under the terms of Decree No. 4 of 1998;

(vi) International Labour Convention No. 111 of 1958 concerning discrimination in employment and occupation, to which Bahrain acceded under the terms of Decree No. 11 of 2000.

50. Ad hoc committees are currently studying the question of accession by the State of Bahrain to a number of other human rights instruments.

PART II

A. General measures of implementation

1. Measures to ensure that national law and policy are in conformity with the provisions of the Convention

51. The State of Bahrain believes that it is very important that children should be brought up and educated in such a way as to promote their optimum development from all the physical, mental, emotional, cultural, moral and spiritual standpoints and prepare them to become upright citizens and instruments for the preservation of ongoing cultural and human interaction between the generations.

52. The State of Bahrain has always shown concern for the welfare of children in order to ensure their proper upbringing and education in accordance with the lofty values and high moral standards of religion. This welfare is among the objectives highlighted in the body of the Constitution, which stipulates that the State has an obligation to protect children and the young generation and show concern for the physical, moral and intellectual development of young persons. The State's fulfilment of this obligation is clearly evident from the manner in which children enjoy legal protection under the various relevant legislative enactments and from the social, economic, cultural and other measures that are being taken in this regard.

53. The Ministries, in collaboration with the other bodies concerned, are studying the measures and procedures that the State of Bahrain is applying to safeguard the rights of the child, bearing in mind the provisions of the Convention on the Rights of the Child, including the provision in article 44 under which States parties undertake to submit to the Committee on the Rights of the Child reports on the measures they have adopted which give effect to the rights recognized in the Convention and on the progress made on the enjoyment of those rights.

2. Remedies and measures to strengthen and protect the rights recognized in the Convention

54. In addition to the information contained in part I concerning remedies and measures to strengthen and protect recognized rights, article 32 of the Juveniles Act promulgated in Decree No. 17 of 1976 stipulates that the decision handed down by the juvenile judge must be notified to one of the juvenile's parents, his guardian or the person responsible for him, who have the right to institute appeal proceedings, in the juvenile's interests, against that decision in the legally prescribed manner. Article 32 of the Act further stipulates that an appeal may be lodged against judgements handed down by a juvenile court, with the exception of those involving a reprimand or ordering delivery of the juvenile into the custody of a parent or guardian, since the Act does not permit appeals against these two types of judgement which are conducive to the best interests of the juvenile concerned.

55. With regard to juvenile delinquents over 15 but under 18 years of age, article 70 of the Penal Code promulgated in Decree No. 15 of 1976 stipulates that judgements handed down against persons in this age group must take into account their young age, which constitutes a mitigating circumstance that warrants reduction of the penalty by at least two degrees. Enforcement of the penalty may also be suspended in accordance with articles 71 and 81 of the Code.

56. If those provisions are not applied, the convicted person is entitled to lodge an appeal, in accordance with article 158 of the Code of Criminal Procedure of 1966, on the ground that the judgement violated the provisions of those articles. If the Court of Appeal rejects the appeal, the convicted person may contest the legality of the judgement before the Court of Cassation.

57. The Court of Cassation is empowered to verify the proper application of the Juveniles Act and the Penal Code whenever judgements handed down by the Courts of Appeal are contested on grounds of their illegality.

3. National mechanisms to coordinate policies on children and monitor the implementation of the Convention

58. Cabinet Decision No. 15 of 1999, promulgated on 11 July 1999, made provision for the establishment of a National Committee on Childhood (see annex 5) consisting of representatives of the Ministries, public institutions and private associations concerned with children. The Committee's function is to oversee all child-related matters and activities, to promote the development of children of all age groups, to endeavour to provide children with legal protection in all fields, to monitor and study their basic problems and needs and to propose appropriate solutions thereto. The Committee is also the national body responsible for monitoring compliance with the Convention on the Rights of the Child, including the preparation of the national reports on its implementation.

59. The State of Bahrain is endeavouring to concert and coordinate the efforts that are being made, at the national level, by the various bodies and institutions providing services for children with a view to ensuring that all such services are integrated and accord the highest priority to the interests of the child so that the State can fulfil its obligations towards its children in accordance with the international instruments and conventions to which it is committed, since the State believes in the importance of the stage of childhood as a basic foundation for the future. This concern, and the response that it has elicited, are illustrated, inter alia, by the following procedural measures:

(a) The National Committee on Childhood is responsible for coordinating the preparation and implementation of a national plan of action and monitoring the implementation of the World Declaration on the Survival, Protection and Development of Children in the 1990s and the Convention on the Rights of the Child;

(b) The Ministries of Health, Education and Labour and Social Affairs have established working groups to study the provisions of the Convention with which they are

directly concerned, to compare them with the services that they are providing, and to monitor the plans that have been formulated for the implementation of the provisions that have not yet been put into effect;

(c) A committee, consisting of representatives of the Ministries and the public and private institutions concerned, including the bodies responsible for laws and legislation, has been established to prepare a comprehensive report on child-related services in the State of Bahrain and to formulate a comprehensive national plan for children;

(d) The authorities attach great importance to private voluntary work and the Ministry of Labour and Social Affairs is providing moral, material and technical support for the projects of associations seeking to further the interests of children and women.

60. Within the context of the State of Bahrain's endeavours to promote the welfare of children, the laws concerning children are currently being reviewed with a view to the formulation of appropriate recommendations to consolidate the State's achievements in the field of child welfare and intensify the efforts that are being made in this regard, bearing in mind the fact that the laws under which children are protected in the State of Bahrain embody an integrated concept of the rights of the child in all spheres of life and therefore ensure the material and moral security of children. In this connection, it is noteworthy that the legal system, being derived from the provisions of the Islamic Shari'a, guarantees the legal protection and social welfare of Bahraini children in a manner consistent with the Convention on the Rights of the Child.

B. Definition of the child

61. The legislation in force in the State of Bahrain is in conformity with the provisions of article 1 of the Convention on the Rights of the Child, which defines the child as "every human being below the age of 18 years unless, under the law applicable to the child, majority is attained earlier".

62. The Juveniles Act, promulgated in Legislative Decree No. 17 of 1976, defines a juvenile as a person who is under the age of 15 Gregorian years at the time when he commits an offence or is found to be in a situation that exposes him to the risk of delinquency. With regard to impediments to criminal responsibility, article 32 of the Bahraini Penal Code of 1976 stipulates that a person under 15 years of age cannot be held responsible for the commission of an act constituting an offence, being liable solely to the measures provided for in the Juveniles Act. Article 101 of the Penal Code further stipulates that the provisions concerning permissibility, causation and impediments to responsibility, as contained in chapter II concerning criminal responsibility, also apply to minor infractions of the law.

63. Under the terms of article 125, paragraph 4, of the Code of Criminal Procedure of 1966, a court cannot convict a defendant on the basis of the testimony of a juvenile unless the latter's testimony is corroborated by independent evidence furnishing substantive proof not only that the offence was committed but also that it was committed by the defendant.

64. With regard to the testimony of witnesses, article 65 of the Law of Evidence in Civil and Commercial Matters, promulgated in Legislative Decree No. 14 of 1996, stipulates that a person under 15 years of age is not competent to testify although his statements may be heard, as presumptive evidence, without administration of the oath. A person who is not of sound mind is likewise incompetent to testify.

65. Article 10 of the Commercial Code, promulgated in Act No. 7/1987, stipulates that, in the absence of any other impediment, a person over 18 years of age is competent to engage in commercial transactions. Article 7 of the Civil Code of 1970 further stipulates that a person under 18 years of age has the right to institute civil proceedings in accordance with the conditions laid down in the Code. Under article 8 of the Code, civil proceedings cannot be brought in respect of an infraction committed by a person under 18 years of age.

66. Article 13 of the Guardianship of Property Act of 1986 sets the age of majority at 21 Gregorian years and article 2 of the Bahraini Nationality Act stipulates that any person who has not reached the age of 18 Gregorian years must be regarded as a minor.

67. Article 50 of the Private Sector Employment Act of 1976 prohibits the employment of persons of either sex who are under 14 years of age. The Act also makes provision for the following safeguards concerning juveniles:

(a) Juveniles between the ages of 14 and 16 may be employed only on the following conditions and with due regard for the provisions of article 42 of the Act:

(i) Authorization must be obtained from the Ministry of Labour and Social Affairs.

(ii) They must undergo a medical examination to ascertain their physical fitness prior to their entry into service and at periodic intervals thereafter. Their fitness must be attested in a certificate the form of which is determined by the Minister of Health in agreement with the Minister for Labour and Social Affairs.

(iii) They must not be employed in industries or occupations which are designated by the Minister of Health, in agreement with the Minister for Labour and Social Affairs, as hazardous or detrimental to their health.

(b) Juveniles must not be employed during the night-time period, amounting to not less than 11 hours from sunset to sunrise.

(c) Juveniles must not be required to engage in actual work for more than six hours per day and must not be required to be present at the place of work for more than seven consecutive hours. Their working hours must be interspersed with one or more rest periods or meal times totalling not less than one hour, the said period or periods being scheduled in such a way as to ensure that the juvenile does not work for more than four consecutive hours.

(d) Juveniles must under no circumstances be required to work overtime or to remain at their place of work after their stipulated working hours and must not be required to work on days of rest. In general, the exemptions concerning working hours and holidays do not apply to them. Their wages must under no circumstances be based on productivity or piecework.

68. The State of Bahrain has ratified the Forced Labour Convention No. 29 of 1930 and the Abolition of Forced Labour Convention No. 105 of 1957, which are among the basic international labour conventions.

69. The State of Bahrain has also acceded to Arab Labour Convention No. 18 of 1996 concerning the employment of young persons, article 1 of which prohibits the employment of any person under 13 years of age.

70. In the State of Bahrain, the stage of basic education ends when the child obtains the General Certificate of Preparatory Education, i.e. on reaching the age of 15.

71. It is noteworthy that, according to the statistics compiled by the Central Statistical Bureau for 1998, the proportion of married Bahraini women is as follows:

29.5 per cent in the age group 15-19
44.4 per cent in the age group 20-24
73.9 per cent in the age group 15-24

72. The proportion of married Bahraini men in the age group 20-29 amounts to 69.3 per cent.

73. Legislative Decree No. 23 of 1979 regulating enlistment by individuals in the Bahraini Defence Force, as amended, stipulates that recruits into the ranks must not be under 17 or over 35 years of age. This does not apply to non-commissioned officers, technicians or specialized personnel who can be recruited from the age of 15 (as cadets) to the age of 40.

74. It should be noted that there is no compulsory military service in the State of Bahrain.

C. General principles

Non-discrimination (art. 2)

75. The State respects and guarantees the rights of every child within its jurisdiction without any form of discrimination. In this connection, it should be noted that article 18 of the Constitution of the State of Bahrain stipulates that: "All persons shall be equal in human dignity and all citizens shall be equal before the law in regard to their public rights and obligations without discrimination among them on grounds of gender, origin, language or belief." Article 4 of the Constitution further stipulates that: "Government shall be based on justice, and mutual cooperation and understanding shall constitute firm links between citizens. Liberty, equality, security, tranquillity, education, social solidarity and equal opportunities for citizens shall form pillars of society and shall be guaranteed by the State." In Bahrain, foreigners are treated with full respect and esteem in keeping with the spirit of equality and friendship that characterizes

Bahraini society. For example, foreigners have access to the same judicial, security, cultural, health, educational and other services as citizens. Of the 39 private schools in Bahrain, 17 are for foreigners and there are also numerous foreign social and cultural associations.

76. In actual practice, there is no social, health, educational or other form of discrimination against children.

Best interests of the child (art. 3)

77. The best interests of the child are the first consideration in all procedures concerning children and the requisite protection and care are provided in order to guarantee their welfare. The State ensures that the institutions, government departments and facilities responsible for the care or protection of children meet the standards set by the competent authority.

78. Article 5 of the Constitution stipulates as follows: "The family, which derives its strength from religion, morality and patriotism, is the cornerstone of society. The law shall protect its legal structure, strengthen and develop its bonds and protect mothers and children within its bosom. The law shall also provide for the welfare of the rising generation, protect them from exploitation and shield them from moral, physical and spiritual neglect. The State shall show particular concern for the physical, moral and intellectual development of young persons."

79. The Bahraini Constitution derived these principles from the Islamic Shari'a, on which the family system in the State of Bahrain is based. The stipulation to the effect that the family, based on religion and morality, is the cornerstone of society reflects the concern that Islam shows for children, the interests and welfare of whom are accorded priority equivalent to the religious obligation to fight for the cause of God. In Islam, both the mother and the father have an obligation to ensure the care and welfare of their children, since they are the ones most capable of doing so.

80. Islam also regulates the natural and legal guardianship of children, who need someone to take charge of their personal affairs, such as maintenance, education, guidance and medical care, or to manage their property. In the words of Almighty God: "Do not touch the property of orphans, except with the best of motives, until they reach maturity. Keep your promises; you are accountable for all that you promise" (Holy Koran, verse 33 of the chapter entitled "The Night Journey").

81. Guardianship of property is regulated by legal principles under which a guardianship council must be established to manage the property of minors. The powers of the guardians, the circumstances in which their guardianship is terminated and the minor gains control of his or her property, and other matters, are all regulated by the law, which shows due regard for the best interests of minors and juveniles.

82. Legislative Decree No. 25 of 1998, concerning private educational and training institutions, makes child custody subject to the control and supervision of the Ministry of Labour and Social Affairs and the Ministry of Education and empowers the Minister for Labour and Social Affairs to take decisions regulating these matters.

83. In order to emphasize the concern that the State of Bahrain is showing for the interests of the child and encourage more intensive endeavours on the part of the public and private bodies that have already helped to ensure major achievements in this field, Cabinet Decision No. 15 of 1999, promulgated on 11 July 1999, made provision for the establishment of a National Committee on Childhood, chaired by the head of the Public Authority for Youth and Sport and including representatives of the Ministries of Foreign Affairs, the Interior, Justice and Islamic Affairs, Cabinet Affairs and Information, Health, Labour and Social Affairs and Education, as well as the Public Authority for Youth and Sport and private associations.

The right to life, survival and development (art. 6)

84. Article 8 (a) of the Constitution stipulates that: "Every citizen has the right to health care. The State shall show concern for public health and shall ensure the availability of means of prevention and treatment by establishing various types of hospitals and health facilities." These hospitals and facilities have separate sections for children.

85. The health services that the State of Bahrain is providing in order to protect the right of the child to life, survival and development and to protect children from all the diseases to which they might be exposed are referred to in detail below in paragraph 37 of the report, concerning survival and development.

Respect for the views of the child (art. 12)

86. Article 23 of the Constitution stipulates that: "Freedom of opinion and of scientific research shall be guaranteed. Everyone shall have the right to express and propagate his opinion orally, in writing or by any other means."

87. All citizens, including children, enjoy freedom of opinion and expression within the limits of the law.

88. In accordance with the Law of Evidence in Civil and Commercial Matters, promulgated in 1996, the statements of a person under 15 years of age may be heard, as presumptive evidence, without administration of the oath.

89. Persons under 18 years of age have the right to institute civil proceedings in accordance with the conditions laid down in the Civil Code of 1970.

D. Civil rights and freedoms

Name and nationality (art. 7)

90. Children are registered immediately after birth and are given a trinomial name, which is entered in a birth certificate issued by the competent authorities in the State. Article 4 of the Registration of Births and Deaths Regulatory Act of 1970 stipulates that births must be notified, in writing or orally, to the Ministry of Health and the competent official must verify the accuracy of the information entered on the birth notification form.

91. The child's nationality is governed by the Bahraini Nationality Act of 1963, as amended, under which a person is deemed to be Bahraini:

(a) If he was born in or outside Bahrain to a father who was Bahraini at the time of the birth;

(b) If he was born in or outside Bahrain to a mother who was Bahraini at the time of the birth, in the event of the child's father being unknown or his paternity not being legally established;

(c) If he was born in Bahrain to unknown parents, a foundling being deemed to have been born therein failing proof to the contrary.

92. When a person is granted Bahraini nationality under the terms of article 4, concerning naturalization, his minor children at the time of his acquisition of that nationality are deemed to be Bahrainis by naturalization but have the right, within one year from the date on which they reach the age of majority, to opt for their original nationality. Anyone born to such a person after his naturalization is likewise deemed to be Bahraini by naturalization.

93. Under the Passports Act No. 11 of 1975, minor children and unmarried daughters have the right to be issued with passports in the manner detailed in the provisions of the said Act, as amended, and in its implementing regulations promulgated by the Minister of the Interior in Ordinance No. 15 of 1976.

Preservation of identity (art. 8)

94. Under the terms of article 14 of the Central Population Registry Act, every Bahraini and non-Bahraini resident over 16 years of age is obliged to carry a Central Population Registry card, which may be issued to the guardian of a person below that age provided that the guardian assumes responsibility, on behalf of its holder, for its proper use and safe keeping.

95. The card shows the person's name and registration number, which appears on all the official documents, records and files concerning him. The card's holder has an obligation to present it to the representatives of the public authorities whenever so requested. A child's name may be changed at any time, in accordance with the procedures applied by the civil courts, with the consent of the child's parents provided that the new name is among those that are customarily used in Bahraini society.

96. Under article 317 of the Bahraini Penal Code of 1976, anyone who falsifies the parentage of a newborn child, removes or alters the facts concerning a child's personal status or enters fictitious personal details in official registers is liable to a penalty of detention. Article 18 of the Registration of Births and Deaths Act of 1970 prescribes a penalty of detention and/or a fine for anyone who deliberately provides false information or resorts to fraudulent or illicit means in order to register a birth.

97. From the above, it is evident that the State of Bahrain protects children from being deprived, in any way, of some or all of the constituents of their identity.

Freedom of expression (art. 13)

98. Article 23 of the Constitution stipulates that freedom of opinion and of scientific research shall be guaranteed and that everyone shall have the right to express and propagate his opinion, orally, in writing or by any other means, in accordance with the legally specified conditions and procedures. Article 24 of the Constitution further stipulates that freedom of the press and of printing and publication shall be guaranteed in accordance with the law.

99. Children have numerous opportunities to express their views and obtain information and are encouraged to develop various aspects of their personalities, as is clearly illustrated by the radio and television programmes in which children participate and by the broadcasting of special radio programmes on school activities. This freedom is also exercised at children's scientific clubs and cultural and information centres such as the Scientific Centre and the Sulman Cultural Centre for Children, both of which are run by the Children's Department, and the scientific clubs run by the Public Authority for Youth and Sport. The two centres, which are open to children from 7 to 18 years of age, enable them to meet, engage in creative activity, exhibit their works and manifest their talents through the practice of numerous scientific, cultural and recreational activities ranging from painting, dramatic art and computer technology to music and scientific activity. Cultural services, including a specialized library for children and cultural and artistic competitions, are also provided and it is intended to expand these centres now that they have proved successful and outstandingly popular with children and their guardians.

Freedom of thought, conscience and religion (art. 14)

100. Although Islam is the official religion of the State, freedom of thought and of religious observance is enjoyed by all, including non-Muslims. Article 22 of the Constitution stipulates that: "Freedom of conscience shall be absolute and the State shall guarantee the inviolability of places of worship as well as freedom to engage in religious observances and to participate in religious processions and meetings in accordance with the customs observed in the country." In Bahrain, there are 13 churches for the various Christian communities. Since the Bahraini people are characterized by their tolerance, all religions enjoy legally guaranteed freedom to engage in their observances and the State encourages children to exercise their rights in a manner consistent with their capabilities.

101. By law, parents and guardians enjoy freedom in regard to the guidance and education of their children and can choose between the education provided at government-run or private schools.

Freedom of association and of peaceful assembly (art. 15)

102. Article 27 of the Constitution stipulates as follows:

> "Freedom to form association and trade unions at the national level, for lawful purposes and by peaceful means, shall be guaranteed in accordance with the legally specified conditions and procedures. No one shall be compelled to join or remain in an association or trade union."

Under the terms of article 28 of the Constitution:

"Individuals shall have the right to assemble without the need for prior notification or authorization and no member of the security forces shall be permitted to attend such private meetings. Public meetings, processions and gatherings shall be permitted in accordance with the legally specified conditions and procedures, provided that their purposes and means are peaceful and consistent with morality."

103. The Social and Cultural Associations and Clubs, Private Institutions and Sports Organizations Act promulgated in Legislative Decree No. 21 of 1989 regulates the right to establish associations and clubs for purposes of social, educational, cultural or charitable activities. It also permits the registration of such associations with the legally specified authorities. The Act prohibits the establishment of associations for purposes which would violate public order or morality or prejudice the integrity of the State or the social order. Associations established for such purposes are unlawful.

104. The Act regulates membership of associations, as well as the election of their governing bodies. It also makes provision for the establishment of sports clubs and federations, including the Olympic Committee, and stipulates that their governing bodies must be elected.

105. Cooperative associations, which are regulated by Act No. 8 of 1972, are subject to the same basic principles, including the requirement that their administrative organs must be elected.

106. The State of Bahrain has 204 registered associations operating in various fields, including 37 foreign associations, 28 foreign clubs and 8 cultural and scientific associations registered with the Ministry of Information.

107. The above-mentioned associations pursuing a wide variety of aims and activities serve Bahraini society as well as the foreign communities of various nationalities.

Protection of privacy (art. 16)

108. Privacy is protected by the Constitution and the law. For example, article 25 of the Constitution stipulates that: "Homes shall be inviolable and shall not be entered or searched without the permission of their occupants except in cases of extreme necessity and in the manner prescribed by law." Article 26 of the Constitution further stipulates that: "Freedom of postal, telegraphic and telephone communications shall be safeguarded and their confidentiality shall be guaranteed. Communications shall not be censored nor shall their confidentiality be violated except in cases of necessity provided for by law and in accordance with the procedures and guarantees specified therein."

Access to appropriate information (art. 17)

109. The State of Bahrain believes in the role played by information and in the need to make effective use of the possibilities and opportunities that it and the new methods of international communication offer for the transmission of information. It also believes in the role that information plays in providing families with the knowledge and skills needed to improve the

situation of their children. Accordingly, the State shows concern for programmes intended for families and children and monitors and utilizes new developments at the Arab and international levels in order to develop its local programmes.

110. The State's public agencies and private associations disseminate information of use to children through television and radio programmes and newspapers. The Ministry of Education is also playing a role in this regard by providing educational resource centres and scientific laboratories for children at government-run schools and diligently developing and modernizing the academic curricula in a manner consistent with the educational needs of children.

111. The endeavours that are being made in this field are illustrated by the Ministry of Education's Information and Documentation Centre, which has a broad database of educational research works, studies and scientific publications for children. The Ministry also operates an Educational Research Centre which prepares and publishes research and studies for children at all educational levels. The Public Authority for Youth and Sport operates a children's library at the Sulman Cultural Centre and the Mother and Child Welfare Association runs an information centre for women and children. The latter centre, which is linked to the information network of the Arab Council for Children and Development, is endeavouring to provide a broad database of information and studies, as well as a bibliography on subjects of interest to women and children, in the form of periodicals, university theses, research works, conference papers and other audio-visual material from the Arab region. The centre has begun to provide services for specialists in women's and child-related issues and also for university students and public and private scientific institutions in and outside Bahrain and is exchanging services and publications with similar centres. In addition, the centre is conducting social, educational, psychological, health, demographic and other studies and research with the assistance of Arab and international organizations, which are also helping it to plan and enhance its database on the family and children.

112. The State of Bahrain has a large number of public libraries, comprising special sections for children, and encourages the organization of numerous exhibitions of children's books, which are readily available to the public. The numerous Internet centres in all parts of the country offer further possibilities for children to obtain appropriate information

The right not to be subjected to torture or other cruel, inhuman or degrading treatment or punishment (art. 37 (a))

113. Article 19 (d) of the Bahraini Constitution stipulates that: "No one shall be subjected to physical or mental torture, enticement or degrading treatment, for which the law shall prescribe penalties. Any statement or confession found to have been obtained through torture, enticement or such treatment, or threat thereof, shall be deemed null and void."

114. The Juveniles Act No. 17 of 1976, to which reference has already been made, makes no provision for capital punishment or life imprisonment as penalties for juveniles who commit crimes. Article 6 thereof merely prescribes a number of measures such as a reprimand, delivery into the custody of a parent or guardian, the fulfilment of specific obligations or placement in a governmental or private social welfare institution.

115. Chapter V of the Penal Code of 1976 refers to impediments to responsibility. For example, article 32 stipulates that a person under 15 years of age cannot be held responsible for the commission of an act constituting an offence, being liable solely to the measures provided for in the Juveniles Act.

116. Article 70 of the Penal Code (in chapter IV concerning exonerating and mitigating circumstances) stipulates that mitigating circumstances include the young age of a defendant over 15 but under 18 years of age and the commission of an offence for honourable motives or purposes or as a result of severe and undue provocation by the victim. Article 71 further stipulates that, if a mitigating circumstance is established in a case involving an offence punishable by the death penalty, the penalty must be reduced to imprisonment or detention for a period of not less than one year and, if the offence is punishable by imprisonment for life or for a fixed term, it must be reduced to the penalty for a misdemeanour, unless otherwise specified in the Code.

117. The Code of School Discipline promulgated by the Ministry of Education was designed to develop a sense of responsibility among schoolchildren, preserve their dignity, safeguard their rights, ensure justice and equality in disciplinary measures and prohibit beatings and corporal punishment in all schools. Pupils are given opportunities to lodge complaints and grievances with their school's governing body and with the Department of Education and can also use a "hot line" to bring their questions, issues and problems to the attention of the Ministry of Education, from which they receive a direct response.

118. The State of Bahrain acceded to the Convention against Torture and Other Cruel, Inhuman or Degrading Treatment or Punishment on 5 April 1998 under the terms of Decree No. 4 of 1998 promulgated on 18 February 1998.

E. Family environment and alternative care

Parental guidance (art. 5)

119. The State respects the rights and obligations of parents or, as appropriate, of the members of the extended family or the persons legally responsible for guiding the child in the exercise of his or her rights.

120. As already mentioned, article 5 of the Constitution stipulates that the family is the cornerstone of society and that the law shall protect its legal structure, strengthen and develop its bonds and protect mothers and children within its bosom. Article 4 of the Constitution further stipulates that government shall be based on justice, and mutual cooperation and understanding shall constitute firm links between citizens.

Parental responsibilities (art. 18, paras. 1-2)

121. The Islamic Shari'a emphasizes the need for parents to show the utmost concern for the upbringing and development of their children. The State provides appropriate assistance for the parents or persons legally responsible for the child through its legislative provisions and the health, educational, social and other welfare services and activities that it organizes for children.

122. It is noteworthy that the State authorities and private sector institutions concerned with children attach great importance to the question of the provision of crèches to which working women can entrust their children under three years of age. The Ministry of Labour and Social Affairs is supervising the crèches run by the associations that render this public service and is providing them with the financial and technical support needed to improve the standard of their services. The Ministry also encourages the establishment of such crèches, supports their staff training programmes and drafts laws and regulations to regulate their activities.

123. In order to encourage women to enrol in programmes for the eradication of illiteracy, crèches have been established at literacy centres to take care of the children of their female students.

124. The Ministry of Labour and Social Affairs supervises all the private crèches, while the Ministry of Education is responsible for formulating the curricula of kindergartens, supervising their application and ensuring an appropriately healthy educational environment for the children.

125. In response to the request for the establishment of crèches and kindergartens at places of work, some Ministries, such as the Ministries of Information and Defence, have established crèches in their premises to take care of the children of their female staff. The main purpose of the establishment of these crèches is to encourage women to seek employment without worrying about their children and to ensure the proper care and upbringing of children in the early stages of their lives.

Separation from parents (art. 9)

126. The Juveniles Act of 1976 stipulates that a child cannot be separated from his or her parents and placed in a juvenile social welfare institution unless found to be in a situation that exposes the child to the risk of delinquency or endangers the child's health, security, morals or upbringing. It should be noted that a juvenile can be so separated for misconduct only with the consent of his or her father, legal or testamentary guardian, or mother, as appropriate.

127. Under the terms of article 317 of the Bahraini Penal Code, any one who abducts, conceals or substitutes a newborn child is liable to a penalty of detention. Under article 318 of the same Code, any one who, having been ordered to hand over a child under his guardianship to the person to whom the child's custody or safe keeping has been awarded, fails to do so is liable to a penalty of detention and/or a fine.

128. From the above, it is evident that the child has a natural right to grow up and live with his or her parents. However, if this is precluded by circumstances, the child is protected by the law from exploitation or ill-treatment even on the part of the child's parents.

129. The Ministry of Labour and Social Affairs pays monthly amounts of financial assistance, through its Department of Social Assistance, to orphaned and disabled children and to the children of convicts.

Family reunification (art. 10)

130. There is no legal provision that prevents families from leaving the country or returning thereto for purposes of family reunification or family gatherings. All Bahrainis and foreigners have the right to leave the country and return thereto provided that they meet the stipulated legal requirements.

Illicit transfer and non-return (art. 11)

131. The Passports Act of 1975 stipulates that passports issued to Bahraini citizens must include the names of their wives and minor children accompanying them on their journey, as well as their dates of birth and gender, their photographs being affixed to the passport and stamped by the passport issuing authority.

132. The said Act permits the issue of separate passports to persons lacking legal capacity only with the consent of their legal representatives.

133. The Act therefore ensures that children do not travel without the consent of their parents or the persons acting on the latter's behalf. Moreover, in order to protect their children, parents have the right to petition tne courts to prohibit their children holding separate passports from travelling alone without their consent.

Recovery of maintenance for the child (art. 27, para. 4)

134. In accordance with the provisions of the Islamic Shari'a, child maintenance, comprising food, clothing, accommodation, education and medical treatment, is a legal obligation borne by the child's father while he is married to the child's mother, and even if the child's parents divorce, until the child is old enough to work and earn a living or, in the case of girls, until they marry. The maintenance obligation continues if the child is unable to earn a living due to a disability or for any other health-related reason. The child's mother, if wealthy, or the person responsible for the child's welfare in the event of the death of the parents, also has an obligation to maintain the child.

135. The financial situation of the maintenance provider is taken into account when assessing the amount of maintenance, which may be increased in the event of a change in the provider's economic circumstances. It is noteworthy that ongoing maintenance takes precedence over all the providers' other debts.

136. Article 39 of the Guardianship of Property Act stipulates that, on reaching the age of 18, a minor may be authorized to receive and manage all or part of his property, in which case, the minor may be required to pay from his net income the amount needed to meet his expenses and the expenses of those for whom he is legally responsible.

137. Under article 44 of the same Act, on reaching the age of 16, a minor may be authorized to enter into a contract of employment, in which case he is competent to dispose of the wage or other remuneration that he earns from his work.

138. Bahraini law contains provisions that regulate the recovery of child maintenance (see annex 6).

139. Under the provisions of the above-mentioned Act, the guardian has an obligation to safeguard and manage the minor's property and to provide the minor with monthly maintenance, failing which he is liable to a penalty of detention and/or a fine for committing the offence of causing prejudice to movable property owned by a person lacking legal capacity.

Children deprived of a family environment (art. 20)

140. One of the guiding principles on which social action in regard to children is based stipulates as follows: "Social action is a means the aim of which is to benefit human beings and social solidarity and cohesion are the principle guarantees of its success." The strategic objectives for the application of this principle are defined as follows:

(a) Concern for the family and endeavours to provide it with the requisite social services, contribute to the solution of the problems that it encounters, ensure its stability and increase the income of its members;

(b) Contribution to the establishment of a safe society by providing various types of care and rehabilitation for disabled children, preparing them to engage in forms of work consistent with their abilities, integrating them in society, protecting members of local communities, and particularly children, from delinquency, studying their problems, providing them with sound counselling and endeavouring to ensure their economic security through financial assistance that guarantees them a decent life.

141. The Ministry of Labour and Social Affairs is eager to protect children from temporary or permanent deprivation of their family environment in order to safeguard their interests and ensure that they remain in a healthy environment that guarantees their proper upbringing and education. To this end, the Ministry has established a Child Welfare Centre at which orphaned children and children of unknown parentage are cared for in an alternative family environment. The following paragraphs give examples of this care and protection.

Fosterage

142. Under this Islamic alternative to adoption, the fosterage of children faced with special circumstances, including orphans and children of unknown parentage, is subject to various rules and conditions, including the following:

(a) The family must be Bahraini;

(b) The family relations must be closely knit and stable;

(c) The family must be of good conduct and reputation;

(d) The family must be capable of undertaking child care in all its social, economic and health-related aspects;

(e) The foster parent must not be over 50 years of age;

(f) The family must not already have more than two children, who must be old enough to be self-reliant. Preference is accorded to childless families;

(g) An unmarried, divorced or widowed Bahraini woman may foster a child provided that she meets the other stipulated conditions.

143. The State of Bahrain is currently applying the system of fosterage (kafalah) provided for in Islamic law. The Ministry of Labour and Social Affairs, in coordination with the Ministry of Justice and Islamic Affairs, implements the fosterage decisions taken by the competent courts in accordance with Islamic law and the foster child's official identity papers are issued by the other bodies concerned in the Ministry of Health and the Ministry of the Interior.

Juveniles

144. Bahrain strongly believes that this category of children must be protected and cared for so that they can live in harmony and concord with others without being exposed to the risk of delinquency.

145. In keeping with this belief, the Ministry of the Interior established a Juvenile Welfare Centre shortly after the State of Bahrain gained its independence in 1973. This Centre, which is rightly regarded as one of the region's model centres since its educational and rehabilitation facilities and programmes meet the highest international standards, has been commended by numerous States and governmental and non-governmental organizations including, for example, experts from the United Nations Commission on Human Rights and a delegation from Amnesty International who visited the centre.

146. In the State of Bahrain, juvenile welfare is divided into two categories: institutional and non-institutional care.

(a) Non-institutional care

147. The responsibility for this type of care is undertaken by the Juvenile Section of the Women's Police at the Ministry of the Interior, in collaboration with the Juvenile Welfare Unit at the Ministry of Labour and Social Affairs.

148. In cases of exposure to delinquency, such as begging, peddling, truancy from educational institutions and lack of parental control, the sociologist at the Office of the Women's Police serves notice, in writing, on the guardian to provide the juvenile with the care and supervision needed to ensure that the juvenile is never again found in a situation that exposes him or her to the risk of delinquency. A copy of the said notice is sent to the Juvenile Welfare Unit at the Ministry of Labour and Social Affairs, the staff of which monitor the juvenile's welfare and endeavour to overcome any obstacles impeding the rectification of his or her conduct. If the juvenile is again found to be at risk of delinquency six months after the notice was served, the

juvenile's case is once again referred to the Women's Police, who takes the necessary measures to bring the matter, through the Juvenile Social Welfare Unit, to the attention of the juvenile court. The situations that entail a risk of delinquency include:

(i) Frequentation of delinquents, suspected delinquents or persons renowned for their bad conduct;

(ii) Engagement in, or assisting persons engaged in, acts associated with prostitution, vice, moral corruption, gambling or narcotic drugs, etc.;

(iii) Lack of a legitimate livelihood or reliable provider;

(iv) Affliction with a mental disease or infirmity entailing total or partial loss of discretion or choice and endangering the safety of the afflicted person or of others.

149. In such cases, the Juvenile Social Welfare Unit of the Women's Police assumes the task of ensuring the juvenile's welfare. It may do so without applying to the juvenile court unless so required.

150. If the case is to be referred to the juvenile court, the Unit's staff undertake a comprehensive social study of the juvenile's family circumstances, taking into consideration the health and economic aspects, the nature of the relations between the parents, the size of the family, the juvenile's social history and academic status and the reasons for his delinquency from the viewpoint of his family and the social worker, and then propose the measures most conducive to his reform. This report is submitted, with the case file, to the juvenile judge.

151. The staff of the Social Welfare Unit assume responsibility for the juvenile's welfare after the juvenile court has ordered an appropriate measure other than a confinement order. These measures are limited to the following:

A reprimand;

Delivery into the custody of a parent or guardian;

Enrolment for vocational training;

Fulfilment of specific obligations;

Judicial probation.

152. In the case of the above-mentioned measures, the sociologists at the Welfare Unit visit the juvenile's home, school or place of work at least every two weeks in order to monitor his conduct and help him to overcome any obstacles that he might encounter. The Unit's sociologists are required to submit a comprehensive report on improvements in the juvenile's behaviour to the juvenile judge every six months.

153. In cases involving judicial probation, the juvenile judge terminates or extends the measure or replaces it with another measure in the light of the juvenile's circumstances and responsiveness.

(b) Institutional care

154. This is the last resort for persons working with juvenile delinquents who endeavour to avoid separating juveniles from their families unless the juveniles' interests so require.

155. The Juvenile Welfare Centre operates on the basis of a "family system" in which juveniles are distributed among the various families in accordance with their age and the extent of their delinquency. The Centre's female sociologists provide the juveniles with all types of social services from the time of their admission to the Centre until their departure therefrom. In addition to this basic and primary form of care, it also has cultural, educational, recreational and after-care programmes.

156. It is noteworthy that the programmes offered at the Centre include the educational programme adopted by the State's Ministry of Education and vocational programmes under which males are trained in carpentry, electrical engineering, electronics and agriculture and females are trained in dressmaking, embroidery, hairdressing, domestic science and other useful activities. The Centre also provides training in artistic fields, such as painting, handicrafts and sculpture. The juveniles take part in the annual competitions organized by the Ministry of Education in which many of them have won valuable prizes for their outstanding work. In view of the important role that sport plays in physical and moral education, the Centre organizes sports activities and holds sports competitions from time to time.

157. In order to ensure that this category enjoys the requisite forms of legal and legislative protection, the Juveniles Act promulgated in Legislative Decree No. 17 of 1976 defined the term "juvenile" and specified the measures to be taken in the event of delinquency. The Act comprises 45 articles which are applied when dealing with juvenile delinquents or potential delinquents. The Act makes provision for reform measures to be taken against juvenile delinquents or potential delinquents, but does not prescribe penalties for them and does not specify the period of their confinement in social welfare institutions in order to avoid such confinement being regarded as a form of penalty. The juveniles remain in the institutions or the Juvenile Welfare Centre for a period of not more than one year until their conduct improves.

158. The Juvenile Welfare Centre, which was established by the Ministry of the Interior in 1973, accommodates children under 15 years of age whose conduct cannot be reformed or rectified while they are in their natural environment.

159. In general, it can be said that the number of juvenile delinquents and potential delinquents does not constitute a high proportion (only 3.2 per thousand according to the statistics for 1991) of the total number of juveniles under 15 years of age in Bahrain.

160. The Ministry of Education, in collaboration with the Ministry of the Interior, organizes courses to train teachers to deal with juveniles.

161. For its part, the Ministry of Labour and Social Affairs also shows concern for this category by receiving applications concerning juveniles and undertaking the studies and research needed to determine their social, economic and psychological situation and circumstances in order to propose, in coordination with the competent officials in the Ministry of the Interior, the best ways to help them to overcome that situation.

Assistance for the blind

162. In 1974, the State of Bahrain established the Nur Institute for the Blind, which is now known as the Saudi-Bahraini Institute for the Blind. This Institute, which is run by the Regional Bureau of the Middle Eastern Committee for the Blind in the Gulf region, accommodates about 120 male and female students from 6 to 20 years of age. It comprises academic and vocational sections, as well as a telephone operator training section, and organizes various social, cultural, religious and sports activities. The Institute also monitors its students after their graduation in order to help them to find appropriate employment and integrate in society.

163. The Friends of the Blind Association, which was established in 1981, is a private organization that caters for the needs of the blind by endeavouring to achieve a number of objectives, such as facilitating their movements, overcoming the obstacles that they encounter and diligently endeavouring to provide opportunities for the blind to play a role in society by providing them with the requisite forms of care and rehabilitation. The Association established the Friends' Kindergarten, which was opened during the academic year 1990/91, to provide specialized educational care for blind children under six years of age. Thirty children of both sexes are enrolled in this kindergarten every academic year.

164. The Association provides support for needy families with blind members and arranges treatment in cases in which blind persons can be helped to recover or improve their vision through the provision of financial assistance with the aid of private individuals and bodies. It also organizes social, cultural, sports and information activities.

Children with family problems

165. In order to protect this category, the Child Welfare Centre was opened in 1984 to care for orphans, children of unknown parentage and children from broken families, as well as children suffering from family problems, who are transferred to the Centre for temporary care until their family problems are solved and they can return to their natural environment. The purpose of the establishment of this Centre was to provide social, psychological, health, educational and recreational care for this category of children and to develop laws and legislation to promote their welfare. The Centre endeavours to ensure that the children's stay therein is temporary by encouraging their fosterage by Bahraini families in order to provide them with a natural and carefully selected family environment. The Centre monitors the children's adaptation to their foster families and endeavours to overcome the difficulties and obstacles that the foster families encounter. Children who continue to be accommodated at the Centre are enrolled at kindergartens and primary schools when they reach the appropriate age. In view of the desire of the Centre's officials to place children with alternative families that provide them with the requisite care so that they do not remain in the Centre for a long period of time, the Centre is currently accommodating only 34 male and female children under 12 years of age. In order to

ensure that the Centre plays a more effective role in the upbringing of its children, a governing body, consisting of specialists, officials and other persons concerned in the governmental, public and private sectors, has been established to formulate the Centre's general policy and monitor its operations.

166. Private associations are also playing an important role in solving family problems through the establishment of advisory offices to provide families, on request, with counselling, guidance and assistance.

Needy families

167. The Ministry of Labour and Social Affairs is endeavouring to improve the socio-economic circumstances of indigent families by setting up development projects to increase their earnings and provide them with a stable and independent income.

168. The Ministry is also endeavouring to make families and individuals more aware of the importance of work and production so that they can use their aptitudes and abilities to secure a source of income, while monthly amounts of financial assistance are paid, through the Ministry's Social Assistance Department, to indigent families lacking a provider or whose provider is unable to work. This support, from which children from poor or low-income families also benefit, is intended to enable them to lead a normal stable life.

169. Public service associations, such as charitable organizations and funds, some women's associations and the Bahraini Red Crescent Society, provide the requisite financial assistance for needy families and their children.

170. The Minister for Labour and Social Affairs issued Ordinance No. 22 of 1995 concerning the social assistance scheme (see annex 7) from which children also benefit until they reach the age of 18 or, in the case of children over that age who are continuing their education and are therefore regarded as remaining within the bosom of their families, until they complete their university studies. This also applies to girls, who are regarded as remaining within the bosom of their families, even after reaching the age of 18, until they marry or find employment. The Ordinance likewise applies to the families of convicts whose sole provider is serving a prison sentence pursuant to a court judgement and who lack a reliable means of subsistence. Convicts' families continue to receive assistance after their release from prison until they find employment.

171. Financial assistance is paid to orphans who have lost both parents and to children of unknown parents who lack an adequate and reliable means of subsistence until they reach the age of 18 or even beyond that age until they find employment. Assistance is also payable to all disabled or mentally retarded persons over 18 years of age who are totally or partially unable to earn a living and support their families and who lack an adequate and reliable income and require special care that places a burden on their families.

172. In general, it should be noted that the Constitution refers to the role of the State in the provision of social security and social insurance services and stipulates that every citizen has a right to health care.

Adoption (art. 21)

173. The State of Bahrain does not apply the system of adoption, as mentioned in the Convention, since the country's laws make provision for the system of fosterage, in accordance with the Islamic Shari'a, as an alternative to adoption. The State and its numerous private organizations encourage the fosterage of orphaned, poor and gifted indigent children and the Cabinet has recently approved the Fosterage Act which regulates the procedures needed to safeguard the rights of children and foster families and specifies their respective needs and obligations. Consideration is currently being given to the adoption of fosterage procedures under which families would undertake the care and upbringing of children who would retain their independent names and under which non-Bahrainis would not be permitted to foster children from inside the State, although, if they so desired, they would be provided with assistance to adopt children from abroad after a study of the family's circumstances had been conducted in collaboration with the competent authorities in their countries.

Periodic review of placement (art. 25)

174. In accordance with article 6 of the Juveniles Act, the measures that can be taken against juveniles may include placement in a government-run or private social welfare institution or in a specialized hospital. Article 12 of the Act further stipulates that the institution or association in which the juvenile is placed must submit a report on the juvenile's situation and conduct to the court every six months so that the court can decide on the appropriate action to be taken.

175. Article 13 of the Act stipulates that a convicted juvenile must be confined in a specialized institution in order to receive the care that his situation requires. The court reviews the progress made in the juvenile's treatment at periodic intervals of not more than one year, during which it examines his medical reports, and may order his release if it finds that his situation so permits.

Abuse and neglect (art. 19), including physical and psychological recovery and social reintegration (art. 39)

176. The Ministry of Health formed a committee comprising representatives of a number of official bodies concerned, such as the Ministries of Education, Health, Justice, Labour and Social Affairs and the Interior, to formulate a plan for the protection of children. On the basis of the available data concerning the phenomenon of child abuse and in the light of the challenges posed by this phenomenon and the available local resources, a detailed chronological plan of action was drawn up to address this problem in accordance with the following general guidelines:

(a) Treatment and rehabilitation

Restructuring of the Child Protection Committee at the Ministry of Health to include specialists in primary, secondary and psychological health care and female sociologists;

Formulation of protocols to deal with physical, sexual and psychological abuse;

Establishment of a "hot line" so that cases of abuse can be reported by physicians and other professionals;

Organization of a visit by a WHO expert in child abuse (who helped to draw up a detailed plan of action in December 1998);

Establishment of a special register of cases of abuse in order to provide a database for the monitoring of this phenomenon.

(b) Promotion of public awareness concerning the phenomenon of abuse

177. The Committee, in collaboration with public and private institutions, has organized numerous symposia and discussion groups, such as a debate with public information professionals and another debate with primary health care physicians and nurses in 1999, and the following action has been scheduled:

Organization of informative symposia and workshops for persons, such as physicians and nurses, dealing with child victims of abuse;

Organization of a campaign to increase public awareness concerning this phenomenon and ways to prevent it;

Preparation of educational programmes for children, consistent with their ages, concerning the development of social skills and the prevention of abuse.

(c) Law and justice

178. A detailed chronological plan of action has also been prepared for:

The formation of a committee to review Bahraini legislation concerning the protection of children and propose appropriate amendments and additions to the Ministry of Justice in order to ensure more effective protection of children;

The promulgation of legislation under which it would be compulsory to report cases of abuse;

The promulgation of legislation under which it would be compulsory to carry out an autopsy on any child who died for no obvious reason;

The promulgation of legislation to prohibit any person with a record of child abuse from working with children;

The appointment of a special judge to hear cases of abuse;

The formulation of laws and regulations to ensure that children are protected in all institutions, such as kindergartens and schools, that have dealings with them.

179. Reference has already been made, in paragraphs 113 to 117 above, to the legislation under which children are protected from subjection to abuse, neglect, torture or other forms of cruel, inhuman or degrading treatment.

The Strategic Plan to Protect Children

180. Since the month of January 1999, the Ministry of Health has been diligently implementing this Plan, the aims of which are as follows:

To strengthen the family by providing education and employment and meeting its basic needs;

To promote the educational role of schools;

To promote the role of institutions working with children and young persons and to ensure that they are properly controlled;

To accord the highest priority to the interests of the child;

To amend the national laws and legislation and establish an implementing mechanism;

To put intentions and resolutions, including the Convention on the Rights of the Child, into practical effect;

To provide resources to support and protect the family and children and deal with cases of ill-treatment;

To formulate general guidelines for joint action by the various bodies to protect children.

The general framework for the prevention of ill-treatment

181. The general framework for the prevention of ill-treatment consists of measures aimed at:

Improving the psychological, physical and social health of children and their families;

Identifying and supporting children who are subjected to ill-treatment;

Preventing the repetition of ill-treatment in order to protect the child;

According the highest priority to the interests of the child.

F. Basic health and welfare

Health and health services (art. 24)

182. The State of Bahrain has undertaken to achieve a standard of health that will permit its people to live a socially and economically productive life by the year 2000. To this end, the Ministry of Health is diligently endeavouring to ensure the highest standard of all forms of health care and, in particular, of primary health care in accordance with the Declaration proclaimed at the International Conference on Primary Health Care held at Alma Ata in the Soviet Union in 1978, which stated that primary health care formed the basis for the achievement of an

acceptable standard of health in all parts of the world in the foreseeable future. The field that aroused the greatest interest and met with the greatest response in the various departments in the Ministry of Health was maternal and child health, for which specialized therapeutic services are provided at the Sulmaniya Medical Centre, in addition to the preventive services that are available at all the health centres that have been established throughout the country. Maternal and child services, which form part of the primary health-care services, include the periodic examination of children under six years of age in order to monitor their development, detect any impediments thereto at an early stage and intervene rapidly by providing treatment or referring the patient to the competent institutions, in addition to administration of the basic vaccinations to children. The list of vaccinations has recently been expanded to include the latest vaccinations recommended by the World Health Organization in order to keep pace with international scientific developments.

183. With regard to maternity services, which include the care of expectant mothers, at least 99 per cent of pregnant women attend maternity clinics and 98.5 per cent of all births take place under medical supervision. Ultrasonographic examination services for pregnant women have been introduced at four health centres in the country's four health districts where pregnant women who are most at risk are examined and referred to hospital specialists. Post-natal examination and family planning services, as well as periodic examinations for the early detection of breast and cervical cancer among women, are provided at all the health centres. In fact, the State of Bahrain is a pioneer in the provision of such services, which include clinical examinations, laboratory analyses, counselling sessions and referral of patients at risk to hospital specialists. The home visit services are intended mainly for women and children, who constitute the categories most at risk. Prenuptial examination services are also provided for all persons planning to marry in order to reduce the incidence of hereditary blood diseases such as sickle cell anaemia and thalassemia.

184. The Ministry of Health is endeavouring to promote more extensive breastfeeding and, to this end, is implementing the child-friendly hospitals project the aim of which is to encourage and train expectant mothers to breastfeed their infant children immediately after their birth. UNICEF has awarded certificates of merit to all the maternity hospitals run by the Ministry of Health for their successful implementation of this project. It is noteworthy that the State of Bahrain was the first Gulf State to implement such a project on a wide scale.

185. Other important programmes, such as the further training programme and numerous public awareness programmes, are being implemented by female health educators in coordination with the various information media and with the help of numerous educational aids such as brochures and posters. Computerized services are also available, including a special programme for maternal and child services, in order to schedule appointments for patients and provide important statistical data. To this end, all the physicians and nurses working in the maternal and child departments of the health centres have been trained to operate computers and use that programme.

Survival and development (art. 6, para. 2)

186. In order to further develop and improve the standard of health services in the country, the Ministry of Health has established numerous planning committees in the principal health sectors.

These committees include the Maternal and Child Health Planning Committee, which has studied the world health objectives and formulated local objectives prioritized in the light of the country's health problems. The requisite programmes have been prepared to achieve these objectives and monitor their requirements and the obstacles impeding their achievement. It should be noted that the health objectives for the 1990s were achieved a long time before the target date.

187. The objectives of the State of Bahrain's national plan, which incorporates the objectives of the World Declaration on the Survival, Protection and Development of Children in the 1990s, are largely consistent with the objectives set forth in the Arab Plan for Children in the Health Field. Some of the objectives concerning diseases that are not regarded as significant in the State of Bahrain, such as vitamin A and iodine deficiency, have been discarded while others, such as the need to reduce the incidence of hereditary blood diseases, have been added. Some of the principal measures and achievements of the National Plan for Mothers and Children, the aim of which is to protect the lives, survival and the development of children, are described below.

1. Reduction of the mortality rate among children under five years of age

188. In 1998, the mortality rate among children in the age group 1-5 years amounted to 2.0 per thousand (see annex 8). The perinatal infant mortality rate amounted to 14.8 per thousand and the mortality rate among infants under 1 year of age amounted to 8.5 per thousand. These low rates are comparable to those in the developed industrial countries. In 1998, the vaccination coverage rate was 100 per cent for measles and 98 per cent for diphtheria, whooping cough, tetanus and poliomyelitis (see annex 9). To achieve these objectives, the following measures were taken:

(a) Reduction in the incidence of infectious diseases

189. The Ministry of Health is developing vaccination services and increasing their coverage rates in accordance with the methods recommended by the World Health Organization. The following achievements have been made:

A plan has been formulated for the eradication of poliomyelitis and tetanus, from both of which Bahrain has been declared free, no cases having been reported since 1993. The epidemiological monitoring and investigation programmes have also been developed;

Numerous vaccination campaigns have been conducted since 1995 to eradicate poliomyelitis and measles. Approximately 98 per cent of children in the various age groups were vaccinated during those campaigns and booster doses are being administered against those diseases;

Vaccinations are continuing to be administered to children afflicted with sickle cell anaemia (Haemophilus influenzae B and pneumococcal);

Children under five years of age are continuing to be routinely vaccinated against epidemic hepatitis;

Since January 1998, the Haemophilus influenzae B vaccine has been routinely added to the expanded immunization programme;

The vaccinations provided for under the expanded immunization programme have been rescheduled, in order to ensure that children enjoy greater immunity, through the administration of a first dose of the measles-German measles-mumps vaccine at the age of 12 months and a second dose at 5-6 years of age;

A plan has been formulated for the examination of all expectant mothers in order to ensure that they are free from epidemic hepatitis B and for the administration of the vaccine, together with immune globulin, to the children of infected mothers at the time of their birth in order to protect them from infection;

A double tetanus-diphtheria vaccination is administered to male and female schoolchildren at the age of 13 years;

The Health Education Department has prepared programmes for dissemination by the various information media to make the public more aware of the importance of vaccinations and of participation in the national campaigns.

Reduction in the incidence of diarrhoeal diseases and mortality resulting therefrom

190. Death from diarrhoea is a rare occurrence, diarrhoea-related infection and mortality having been reduced through the implementation of numerous programmes to promote the universal use of oral rehydration, the broadcasting of radio and television spots to stimulate public awareness concerning prevention and treatment, and the provision of diagnostic services to identify the causes. According to a family health survey, in 1995 the incidence of diarrhoea amounted to 8.4 per hundred of the population under five years of age.

Reduction in the incidence of respiratory diseases and mortality resulting therefrom

191. In 1995, the incidence of minor and severe respiratory diseases among children under five years of age amounted to 43 per cent, with very few deaths resulting therefrom. The mortality rate from severe respiratory diseases was reduced through:

Ongoing immunization of children against these diseases;

Immunization of children suffering from chronic diseases and prone to annual bouts of influenza;

Preparation and periodic broadcasting of public information messages;

Ongoing training of health workers in diagnostic and therapeutic skills;

Provision of the various types of treatment needed;

The conduct of public awareness campaigns, by the Health Education Department, concerning respiratory diseases and the prevention thereof at the beginning of the winter season.

(b) Reduction in the incidence of accidents

192. According to a family health survey, the incidence of accidents among children under five years of age amounted to 5 per cent in 1995. Of these accidents, at least 75 per cent occurred at home, 12 per cent on the roads and 13 per cent in other places.

193. The various programmes that have been formulated to reduce the incidence of accidents focus on public education and training in first aid in order to save the lives of victims. Private associations also organize symposia on this subject. For example, the Bahraini Child Development Association has held a seminar on accidents and injuries in parks and other public places and the Health Education Department has organized workshops at social centres and in government-run schools at all educational levels on the prevention of accidents in the home and the principles of first aid. A series of educational lectures on this subject have also been held at maternity hospitals.

(c) Reduction in the perinatal and infant mortality rates

194. The following measures have been taken to achieve this objective:

A committee on the reduction of the perinatal mortality rate among children under five years of age has been established and is currently conducting a survey of the causes of stillbirths;

Periodic meetings are held in the Paediatric Department to study cases of mortality and ways to prevent it;

Bahraini physicians and nurses are continuing to receive specialized on-the-job training in intensive care;

A number of paediatricians have been trained in various fields of specialization, including endocrinology, disorders of the digestive system, enzyme imbalances and hepatic, respiratory, hereditary, neurological and blood disorders so that they can help to form appropriate units in the Paediatric Department and provide the highest standard of care;

The requisite equipment is provided for the care of premature babies in accordance with the latest medical technology and techniques;

A genetic laboratory has been established to detect hereditary diseases through the analysis of chromosomes.

195. In 1998, the birth and mortality rates in the State of Bahrain, as announced by the Public Health Department of the Ministry of Health (see annex 7), were as follows:

Crude birth rate per 1,000 of the population: 20.3;

Stillbirth rate per 1,000 births: 10.8;

Premature birth rate per 1,000 live births: 71;

Perinatal foetal mortality rate per 1,000 births: 14.8;

Early foetal mortality rate per 1,000 live births: 5.4;

Late foetal mortality rate per 1,000 live births: 3.1;

Infant mortality rate per 1,000 live births: 8.5.

2. Reduction in the maternal mortality rates resulting from pregnancy and birth-related complications through the provision of health care during the periods of pregnancy and childbirth, the encouragement of spacing between births and the promotion of public awareness concerning the need for family planning

196. In 1998, the maternal mortality rate, amounting to 0.15 per thousand live births, was low in comparison with other countries and the proportion of births that took place under medical supervision amounted to 98 per cent. In 1995, the proportion of expectant mothers who attended clinics to receive medical care amounted to 99 per cent and the proportion of married women using birth-spacing methods amounted to 62 per cent. According to surveys conducted in 1995, the incidence of iron deficiency anaemia among expectant mothers in the State of Bahrain amounted to about 40 per cent, which is a very high proportion. The following steps have been taken to reduce maternal mortality rates:

Female physicians and State-registered midwives working in maternity clinics, health centres and hospitals are continuing to receive training in the provision of the highest standards of maternal care services and the skilled diagnosis of dangerous cases from the early stages of pregnancy;

Special hospital care is provided for pregnant women suffering from hereditary blood diseases and other chronic diseases;

A hospital indexing system has been introduced to identify pregnant women liable to give birth prematurely;

Ultrasonographic detection equipment is provided at maternity hospitals and health centres and physicians are trained to operate it;

Hysteroscopic equipment to examine the uterine cervix and cavity are provided at gynaecology and maternity departments in order to improve the standard of diagnosis and treatment;

Various studies and research projects are being undertaken in order to evaluate, inter alia, the nutritional status of expectant mothers and the incidence of anaemia among women;

Periodic examination services are provided for women with a view to the early detection of tumours of the breast and cervix;

Family planning services are provided and integrated with maternal and child services in all the health centres;

The Health Education Department of the Ministry of Health is implementing the breast self-examination programme for single and married women at government-run and private institutions;

Various means of contraception for birth-spacing purposes are made available at health centres and private organizations, such as the Family Planning and Care Association, are supporting those services by providing instruction in various methods of contraception and by training health workers;

A special monitoring system has been introduced for women using family planning services;

Training courses and education programmes are organized to promote family planning and the prevention of the spread of iron deficiency anaemia among the various social sectors;

Pregnant mothers are examined periodically to determine their haemoglobin levels;

Some private associations, such as the Bahraini Family Planning and Care Association, and some women's associations, in collaboration with the Ministry of Health, provide public awareness and counselling services in the field of family planning by distributing educational pamphlets and organizing lectures and symposia;

The Bahraini Family Planning and Care Association has established a family planning advisory centre, which is playing an important educative and informative role;

The general trend is to encourage male participation in these educational programmes, in which emphasis is placed on reproductive health and family planning, and numerous private clubs and associations participate in the symposia that are held.

3. Reduction in the incidence of severe and moderate malnutrition among children under five years of age

197. According to a study of the incidence of anaemia among children under six years of age, which was conducted in 1996 by the Department of Nutrition, 47 per cent of children from six months to five years of age were suffering from general symptoms of anaemia and about 32 per cent were suffering from iron deficiency anaemia.

198. The incidence of malnutrition has been reduced through implementation of the following measures:

Female public health nurses receive ongoing training to develop their skills in the field of anthropometric examination and the use of growth tables and curves;

Female health educators and public health nurses receive training in the principles of proper nutrition in order to develop their nutritional know-how and a plan has been formulated, in collaboration with the Department of Nutrition at the Ministry of Health, to develop the skills and know-how of primary health care physicians and nurses with a view to the early detection of problems of malnutrition, including early-stage obesity, so that the requisite examinations and counselling sessions can be organized to prevent an aggravation of the problem. The headquarters of the National Bank of Bahrain has been chosen for the implementation of the first phase of the programme in which health workers will be trained and educational symposia will be held on the subject of proper methods of child nutrition at schools, social centres and clubs attached to health centres. The Department of Nutrition has published tables concerning the nutrition of children under six years of age, which have been distributed to all the health centres;

Data concerning the weight, height and cranial dimensions of children under six years of age are computerized and sophisticated programmes are used to evaluate growth and formulate the requisite treatment plans;

The Ministry's Department of Nutrition conducts periodic nutritional surveys with a view to the identification of cases of malnutrition and the compilation of an extensive database for the development of necessary health plans;

Periodic radio and television spots are broadcast on infant nutrition, weaning, the nutrition of children under six years of age and balanced nutrition;

The Department of Nutrition, in collaboration with other bodies concerned, is studying the possibility of adding iron to locally manufactured flour and adding iodine to salt in order to avoid problems of iron deficiency anaemia and iodine deficiency among the population;

In 1999, the Department of Nutrition conducted a survey to determine the magnitude of the problem of iodine deficiency among schoolchildren in the State of Bahrain and preventive programmes will be formulated in the light of its findings;

At the beginning of every academic year, the Health Education Department prepares numerous programmes to promote greater public awareness of the importance of a proper breakfast for schoolchildren. These programmes are broadcast on the radio and form the subject of articles in primary school magazines.

4. Promotion and encouragement of breastfeeding immediately after birth

199. In 1995, a family health survey found that 97 per cent of all children were breastfed immediately after birth, 64 per cent were breastfed for a period of one year, 40 per cent were breastfed for a period of two years and 36 per cent were breastfed without the addition of other liquids, such as water, to the end of the fourth month. It is hoped that these high figures, which reflect the success of the child-friendly hospitals project in Bahrain, will continue to rise.

200. The principal aims of the child-friendly hospitals project were:

To produce a breastfeeding manual for health workers;

To train all health workers in all aspects of breastfeeding and maternal and child nutrition;

To organize lectures on breastfeeding for expectant mothers;

To conduct clinical breast examinations and advise expectant mothers on the proper ways to overcome breastfeeding obstacles;

To send physicians and State-registered midwives on training courses to learn how to apply the breastfeeding policy.

201. The following steps were taken to achieve these aims:

The Ministry of Health established a Breastfeeding Committee to implement the child-friendly hospitals project, to inform the public, through the information media, of the discontinuation of the free distribution of infant formula, to study the present situation in Bahrain and to formulate a breastfeeding policy to be applied in hospitals and health centres in accordance with the 10 steps recommended by the World Health Organization and UNICEF. This Committee has been expanded to include members from the Defence Force Hospital, the Health Sciences College and social centres;

The child-friendly hospitals project has been implemented at all hospitals and health centres since 1993 and, in that year, the State of Bahrain was awarded a UNICEF certificate acknowledging the fact that the project was being applied successfully in all the maternity hospitals run by the Ministry of Health;

In 1995, the marketing and distribution of infant formula was regulated by an Amiral Decree and, in 1996, the Ministry of Health established a committee to monitor the implementation of the provisions of that Decree;

Preparations were made for the holding, in November 1999, of a workshop for the Arabian Gulf States in order to evaluate the current status of the child-friendly hospitals project and study the needs, obstacles and future plans, in coordination with UNICEF;

A study was conducted to evaluate child-friendly hospital services and verify their effectiveness in improving the nutritional status of the country's children.

5. Reduction in the incidence of hereditary blood diseases

202. In 1992, the incidence of sickle cell anaemia amounted to 2 per cent and the incidence of β-thalassemia amounted to between 2 and 4 per cent. In 1999, these rates had declined by virtue of the educational endeavours and the services provided in the country. According to the data from a study in which male and female schoolchildren were examined in 1999, the incidence of those diseases among that age group was as follows:

Sickle cell anaemia: persons infected 1.2 per cent; carriers of the disease 13.8 per cent;

β-thalassemia: persons infected 0.09 per cent; carriers of the disease 2.89 per cent.

203. The Ministry of Health is taking the following measures to protect the population from those diseases:

Prenuptial examination services have been provided at all the health centres since 1992. They include laboratory analyses to identify persons infected with or carrying disease, as well as a study of the family's pathological history, conduct of the requisite clinical examinations and provision of the necessary counselling and guidance. Dangerous cases are referred to the Department of Hereditary Diseases at the hospital;

The most modern technology and diagnostic equipment for hereditary diseases is available in the Ministry of Health's laboratories;

All the physicians, nurses and health educators working in the health centres receive ongoing periodic training in the provision of prenuptial examination services and in the procedures for the identification of cases requiring special care;

Training courses and national campaigns on hereditary blood diseases, which emphasize the importance of prenuptial examinations, are organized for local female supervisors of social centres and also for schoolchildren and university students;

Brochures and posters are produced to stress the importance of prenuptial examinations;

The Hereditary Blood Diseases Association, which is a private association comprising a group of physicians, specialists and persons concerned with this subject, undertakes studies and research and organizes ongoing public awareness campaigns.

204. The Health Education Department engages in various activities, including:

(a) The delivery of health awareness lectures in this field;

(b) The periodic broadcasting of health spots in radio programmes;

(c) The organization of health exhibitions on all national and health-related occasions;

(d) The dedication of three programmes of the "Doctors on the Air" series to prenuptial examinations.

(e) The broadcasting of periodic television spots on prenuptial examinations;

(f) The publication of short informative messages in daily newspapers.

6. Improvement of the physical, mental and social health of adolescents

205. As a token of its concern for young persons and adolescents, the Ministry of Health established an Adolescent Health Committee to safeguard the present and future physical, mental and social health of adolescents. This Committee comprises representatives of a number of bodies concerned from various departments of the Ministry of Health, the Ministry of Education, the Military Hospital and the Public Authority for Youth and Sport.

206. The Committee has begun to formulate a plan of action in the field of adolescent health and, to this end, is gathering and studying all the health, social and statistical information available on this age group. The members of the Committee are also being provided with a large amount of theoretical information and the first workshop that was held, in collaboration with the World Health Organization, for their benefit focused on four fields:

Health services and what the State is currently providing in this field;

Training;

Information and education;

Studies, research and ongoing evaluation.

207. After a discussion of the needs of adolescents in Bahrain, the Committee held a second workshop with help from a UNDP development fund. An ambitious plan was formulated covering the four above-mentioned fields. In 1999, a committee was formed to supervise the implementation of that plan, prepare a scheduled programme and evaluate the results.

208. The following action has been taken to improve adolescent health.

(a) Quantitative and qualitative improvement of the service provided for adolescents in all the health centres and in the Hospital for Mental Diseases

209. The skills of personnel working in the health sector are being developed through internal and external training courses and endeavours are being made to ensure the availability of the number of personnel needed to provide the requisite counselling services.

(b) Training

210. The numerous categories that are being trained include: physicians, female nurses and health educators, clerks, schoolteachers, parents, journalists and leaders of youth institutions.

(c) Promotion of health awareness through health education

211. The following measures have been taken to achieve this aim:

The Committee established by the Ministry has drawn up an educational plan of action which, hopefully, will be put into effect in the near future with UNDP assistance;

The Adolescent Health Committee held a workshop for the public in collaboration with the Ministry of Education;

The Committee has organized numerous lectures at schools on the subject of adolescent health;

The Committee has conducted a full survey of the academic curricula of Bahraini schools covering the subject of adolescent health;

The Committee is continuing to organize lectures for social supervisors in Bahraini schools on the physical and psychological changes that occur during the stage of adolescence.

7. Promotion of awareness by all family members of the harmful effects of smoking

The Anti-Smoking Association, in collaboration with the Ministry of Health, is promoting greater public awareness of the harmful effects of smoking and the serious diseases to which it leads by publishing educational pamphlets and organizing lectures and television and radio spots;

Cigarette advertising on radio and television has been prohibited by an Amiral Decree;

Smoking in public places has been prohibited by a similar decree;

The national Anti-Smoking Association is playing a major role in the promotion of greater public awareness;

A National Anti-Smoking Committee has been formed under the chairmanship of the Minister of Health;

A programme to promote awareness of the harmful effects of smoking has been included in the academic curricula;

Cigarette marketing companies are obliged to display the agreed health warning on their products;

An Amiral Decree has prohibited smoking on all public transport;

An Amiral Decree has prohibited the sale of cigarettes and other tobacco derivatives to persons under 18 years of age;

An Amiral Decree has prohibited cigarette manufacturers and distributors who sponsor sporting events or competitions from exploiting those occasions to promote or advertise their products;

An anti-smoking awareness committee has been established in most Bahraini schools;

A subcommittee has been established to formulate a strategy to combat the smoking of narghiles.

8. Endeavours to ensure a safe and healthy environment

212. Within the context of the increasingly intensive endeavours that are being made to ensure a safe and healthy environment, Legislative Decree No. 21 of 1996 concerning the environment (see annex 10) stipulated that the agency responsible for environmental affairs at the Ministry of Housing, Municipalities and the Environment would be empowered to issue decisions and instructions on all environmental matters and, in particular, would assume the following functions:

Participation in the formulation of an environmental scientific research policy in collaboration with the bodies concerned;

Exercise of the right to demand any information that it deems necessary from any institution engaged in an activity that might lead to environmental pollution or degradation;

The drafting of laws and legislation and the promulgation of regulations to protect the environment and keep it healthy;

The discussion, study and formulation of proposals and solutions on any environment-related matters or problems referred to it by the Cabinet or by any other public or private body in the State;

The conduct or supervision of comprehensive research and studies on pollution, the monitoring of its adverse effects on health and the environment and the adoption of any preventive means or measures needed to curb all forms of environmental pollution and prevent environmental degradation;

The establishment and monitoring of controls and permissible limits concerning the level and concentration of environmentally pollutant emissions;

Endeavours to promote greater concern for the educational, social, cultural and information-related aspects and to further develop environmental awareness in order to enable society to contribute effectively to the protection and development of the environment;

The formulation and implementation of the plans and programmes needed to train qualified technical personnel in the field of environmental affairs;

The establishment of systems for the compilation, analysis and exchange of data and information with the help of research institutes and organizations and associations specialized in the field of environmental affairs in or outside the State;

The study of international, regional and Arab agreements concerning environmental affairs, and submission of an advisory opinion as to whether Bahrain should accede thereto, in collaboration with the authorities concerned.

213. In order to reduce the level of pollution, safeguard resources and prevent infection with the diseases resulting from environmental degradation, a joint committee consisting of representatives of the Ministry of Health, the Health Sciences College, the Bahraini Physicians Association and the Environmental Protection Committee has been established to examine the correlation between information received and pathological cases, particularly those linked to environmental factors.

214. The Directorate-General for Environmental Affairs at the Ministry of Housing, Municipalities and the Environment, being eager to protect the population and their environment, has taken numerous measures, including the following:

Chemical substances are controlled, licences for their importation being issued in coordination with the bodies concerned, and a study is made of their environmental effects;

Fines are imposed, in collaboration with the Traffic and Licensing Department of the Ministry of the Interior, in respect of motor vehicles the exhaust emissions of which contain toxic components;

Principles and priorities have been established for the implementation of the national emergency plan and the national plan to combat oil pollution, with the participation of all the bodies concerned in the State and in the presence of international observers, in the event of any oil spills in the State's territorial waters;

The State of Bahrain has acceded to the Vienna Convention for the Protection of the Ozone Layer of 1985 and the Montreal Protocol on Substances that Deplete the Ozone Layer.

215. Endeavours are also currently being made to establish a health-care waste disposal unit in view of the considerable threat that such waste poses to the environment.

9. Assurance of general access to clean drinking water and sanitary facilities, especially in rural areas

216. With regard to the assurance of general access to clean drinking water and sanitary facilities, especially in rural areas, pure drinking water and sanitation services have been provided in 100 per cent of the country's urban and rural areas.

Disabled children (art. 23)

217. The State of Bahrain attaches great importance to the right of disabled children to enjoy special care and meets their needs free of charge, whenever possible, through the payment of assistance and the provision of equipment and rehabilitation and training services.

218. Responsibility for the care and welfare of children suffering from any form of disability is assumed by public and private bodies which, with help from the private sector, endeavour to meet their needs through the provision of various types of services, including:

(a) Implementation of care and rehabilitation programmes in the private and government-run centres and facilities specialized in the various forms of disability, which facilitate the social integration and adaptation of disabled persons;

(b) Vocational rehabilitation of children, in order to help them to find a job or suitable work and achieve an appropriate degree of occupational adaptation, through training and guidance programmes tailored to the needs of the labour market;

(c) Provision of opportunities for participation in all social, cultural and sports activities at the local, Arab and international levels with a view to overcoming the feeling of incapacitation;

(d) Provision of various types of compensatory aids, free of charge for persons who cannot afford them, in order to promote their social integration and adaptation;

(e) Exemption of disabled persons from payment of public transport fares;

(f) Issue of reduced-price tickets for disabled persons, together with a companion, to travel to the States of the Gulf Corporation Council in order to facilitate their movement and travel;

(g) Payment of financial assistance to disabled children and their families, if necessary, in order to meet their needs;

(h) Exemption from Customs duty on equipment and apparatus imported for the use of disabled children;

(i) Promotion of greater awareness among families, in order to enable them to protect their children from the causes of disability, through the organization of ongoing programmes, lectures and symposia for parents, guardians and members of local communities;

(j) Examination and diagnosis of disabled children to determine their capacities and aptitudes;

(k) Promotion of health awareness and proper healthy habits through an integrated health education programme designed to prevent diseases and accidents;

(l) Improvement of all aspects of primary health care;

(m) Provision of more extensive data and information to prevent the occurrence or aggravation of disability;

(n) Development and encouragement of the propensities and hobbies of disabled children in order to help them to enrich their lives and occupy their leisure time through recreational activities.

219. Enjoyment of those services is subject to a number of conditions and procedures. For example, the child must be suffering from a mental, auditory or physical disability, must be free from infectious and contagious diseases and, for purposes of rehabilitation, must possess a minimum ability to learn and must not be suffering from behavioural disorders. In addition, the family must want their child to benefit from all those types of services and must cooperate in order to meet their requirements.

220. Joint action by governmental and private bodies in the field of care of the disabled began through the National Committee for the Disabled, which was established in 1984 and included representatives not only of the governmental and private sectors but also of the disabled themselves. On 11 May 1992, the National Committee was renamed the National Foundation for Services for the Disabled, which continued and expanded its functions of formulating public policy concerning rehabilitation of the disabled, proposing legislation, undertaking studies and research work and establishing the projects needed to fund activities relating to the care and rehabilitation of the disabled. The Foundation's principal achievements include the provision of a fixed source of funding for the care of the disabled, the management and operation of a number of investment projects for the benefit of the disabled, and provision of the types of financial and technical support needed for their rehabilitation and the development of their abilities and potential.

221. The Ministry of Labour and Social Affairs provides numerous services for children suffering from disabilities, for whom it has established a number of welfare centres and institutions which provide educational, medical, social and psychological services for children with mental, sensory and physical disabilities. The Ministry of Labour and Social Affairs is also endeavouring to rehabilitate and integrate disabled children in society by providing care and

enrolling those who are capable of integrating at nursery schools and kindergartens. It also secures employment opportunities for disabled persons after their vocational and technical rehabilitation.

222. According to the results of the 1991 General Population and Housing Census published by the Central Statistical Bureau (see annex 11), the proportion of disabled persons per 1,000 of the population amounted to about 7.56 among Bahrainis and 3.4 per cent among the non-Bahraini population.

Welfare institutions for disabled persons

The National Bank of Bahrain Rehabilitation Centre for Disabled Children

223. The aim of this Centre, which is run by the Ministry of Labour and Social Affairs, is as follows:

(a) To rehabilitate disabled children and endow them with the skills needed to become self-reliant in their daily lives;

(b) To provide all types of care and rehabilitation, health, psychological and social services for disabled children;

(c) To integrate disabled children in society so that they can become useful members thereof.

224. In order to be admitted to the Centre, a child must be Bahraini, suffering from severe or moderate mental disability or cerebral palsy, under 12 years of age and free from contagious diseases. Permanent or temporary accommodation and day care are available at the Centre, the services of which include:

(a) Rehabilitation services;

(b) Educational programmes;

(c) Medical services;

(d) Health care and physiotherapy services;

(e) Subsistence services.

The Social Rehabilitation Centre

225. This social rehabilitation institution, which is run by the Ministry of Labour and Social Affairs, was opened in 1980 and comprises three units (special education, vocational training and

protected workshops). Its function is to diagnose the condition of the disabled person, discover his abilities and propensities and endow him with basic academic skills through an educational programme adapted to the various manifestations of disability.

226. The Centre's programmes and services cover academic and vocational skills, self-sufficiency skills, social and recreational skills and vocational training. Its students are enrolled in vocational training and rehabilitation programmes after they have completed the special education programmes.

The Bank of Bahrain and Kuwait Rehabilitation Centre

227. This Centre, which is run by the Ministry of Labour and Social Affairs, provides various types of services for disabled young men who are incapable of working in the labour market in a normal manner. It gives them opportunities to receive training, at protected workshops, in special vocational skills such as equipment maintenance, upholstery, agriculture, handicrafts, housekeeping and cooking.

The Sheikhan al-Farisi Comprehensive Communication Centre

228. This governmental institution, which is run by the Ministry of Labour and Social Affairs, provides a full range of rehabilitation and educational services for persons suffering from auditory disabilities. It has 20 classrooms in which 134 children with hearing disabilities are taught to communicate through intensive auditory, speech and linguistic training programmes. The children receive an academic education based on modern teaching methods and comprehensive means of communication (speech, reading and writing, lip reading, sign language and finger alphabet). The children's families are also taught to understand and deal with them. The Centre endeavours to integrate children who, although hard of hearing, are capable of receiving a normal academic education, in government-run schools after completion of their linguistic and auditory rehabilitation.

The Children's Day Care Centre

229. This Centre, which is run by the Ministry of Labour and Social Affairs, caters for the needs of persons suffering from multiple disabilities. The costs of its construction were covered by a donation from the Sulmaniya Rotary Club and it began its operations in 1993. It currently accommodates 32 male and female children from 4 to 12 years of age suffering from multiple disabilities or cerebral palsy.

The Amal Early Care Centre

230. This Centre, which is run by the Maternal and Child Welfare Association, provides special care for disabled children from 3 to 6 years of age in order to maintain an educational balance between them and their peers. It focuses on developing their linguistic expression, collective participation and other skills, taking into consideration individual differences between the children.

231. The Centre is endeavouring to expand its services to cover persons suffering from blindness and auditory and oral disabilities, who would subsequently be transferred to special institutes on reaching the appropriate age therefor.

The Amal Institute for Disabled Children

232. This Institute, which is run by the Maternal and Child Welfare Association, develops the abilities, skills and behavioural patterns of disabled persons by providing a number of educational, counselling, vocational, health and recreational services. It trains children from 6 to 14 years of age, who are subsequently transferred, in the light of their condition, to rehabilitation centres or ordinary schools.

The Hearing and Speech Development Centre

233. This Centre, which is run by the Bahraini Child Development Association, is aspiring to become one of the most progressive and dynamic centres for the rehabilitation of persons suffering from auditory disabilities in the Arabian Gulf region and in the Arab region in general. It is also aspiring to become a specialized centre for research and studies relating to auditory disabilities and hearing and speech problems at the local, Arab and international levels. The Centre applies the auditory-oral method to teach and deal with its child students.

The "Blossoms of Mobility" Kindergarten

234. This kindergarten, which is run by the Mobility International (Bahrain) Centre, caters for physically disabled children from 3 to 6 years of age. Its aim is to help them to acquire the knowledge and skills needed for social integration and to prepare them for enrolment in ordinary primary schools.

The Wafa Centre

235. This Centre, which is run by the Bahraini Mental Retardation Association, caters for mentally retarded children. Its aim is to provide social and recreational programmes to enhance the children's abilities and skills and help them to develop their personalities and become independent.

The Introversion Centre

236. This Centre, which is run by the Bahraini Mental Retardation Association, caters for solitary children by endeavouring to develop their independence and life skills and endow them with the experience needed to adapt to their social situation. The Centre also provides counselling and guidance for families and trains them in ways to care for, and deal with, their introvert children.

237. The following private bodies are working with disabled persons:

(a) The Mobility International (Bahrain) Centre;

(b) The Friends of the Blind Association;

(c) The Bahraini Committee for Disabled Sports;

(d) The Bahraini Mental Retardation Association;

(e) The Bahraini Down's Syndrome Association;

(f) The Bahraini Child Development Association;

(g) The Maternal and Child Welfare Association;

(h) The Introversion Association;

(i) The Indian Sneha Centre.

238. Some associations, such as the Bahraini Charitable Association, the Bahraini Red Crescent Society and some women's associations, show special concern for the disabled and numerous contributions in this regard are also made by governmental bodies such as the Ministry of Housing, Municipalities and the Environment, the Ministry of Commerce, the Ministry of Transport, the Ministry of the Interior, the Ministry of Health and the Public Authority for Youth and Sport.

Social security and childcare services and facilities (arts. 26 and 18, para. 3)

239. Article 5 (b) of the Constitution stipulates that: "The State shall ensure that the requisite social security is available to citizens in the event of old age, sickness, incapacity for work, orphanhood, widowhood or unemployment. It shall provide them with social insurance and health-care services and shall endeavour to protect them from the scourge of ignorance, fear and poverty." The childcare facilities in the State of Bahrain ensure full care for orphaned children, children from broken families and children of unknown parentage, who are provided with social, educational, psychological, health and recreational care. The high degree of social and family cohesion which, as one of the pillars of Muslim society, characterizes the State of Bahrain considerably eases the burden on the State in this regard.

Standard of living (art. 27, paras. 1-3)

240. The social security and social welfare legislation, together with the other social legislation, ensures that children enjoy legal and social protection. The Social Insurance Act of 1976, as amended, which is the principal social security enactment, ensures the financial security of children by stipulating, inter alia, that children are entitled to a lump sum indemnity if

the insured person dies without leaving a widow (art. 38) and that they are entitled to a monthly pension if the insured person dies or becomes totally disabled as a result of an occupational accident (art. 57).

241. The Act further stipulates that, on the death of an insured person or a pensioner, his pension entitlement devolves on his children or the other categories specified in article 75 of the Act. Such pensions continue to be paid to male children until they reach the age of 22 years or begin to earn an income, unless they can show proof of being incapacitated for work or enrolled for higher or university education. The pensions paid to female children are not discontinued until they marry or earn a wage equivalent to the pension.

242. Under the terms of article 80 of the Act, grandsons and granddaughters are entitled to the pension that would have been payable to their deceased father on the conditions laid down in articles 78 and 79 of the Act. Article 135 sets a minimum level for pensions payable to all beneficiaries, including children, and this minimum has been increased on a number of occasions by decision of the Prime Minister.

243. Male children under 18 years of age (or older, subject to proof that they are continuing their education, until they complete their university studies), female children under that age (or until they marry or find employment), orphans and persons in an equivalent situation, and disabled or retarded persons, are considered to be among the categories entitled to social assistance under the terms of Ordinance No. 22 of 1995, concerning the social assistance scheme, which was promulgated by the Minister for Labour and Social Affairs.

244. Improvement of the socio-economic circumstances of families is one of the urgent objectives of the bodies concerned including, in particular, the Ministry of Labour and Social Affairs. Private associations are also playing a major role in the provision of financial and moral support for families.

245. The endeavours that are being made in this field are illustrated by the following:

(a) The provision of social and financial assistance, with emphasis on the productive family programmes which are designed to secure a fixed source of income for families through the development projects that are being implemented by the Ministry of Labour and Social Affairs, including:

The productive family project;

The local female pioneers project;

The hairdressing project;

The tailoring and dressmaking project;

The adult education project;

The Microstart project.

246. The Ministry of Education has also introduced courses in new fields of specialization, such as tourism, hotel management, insurance and banking, into the academic curricula. In view of the growing demand for some fields of specialization due to the needs of the labour market, some other official bodies, such as the Ministry for Cabinet Affairs and Information, have made arrangements for the award of specialized diplomas in hotel management through their Catering and Hotel Training Centre.

247. With regard to handicrafts, the Ministry for Cabinet Affairs and Information has established the Jasra Craft Centre. The Ministry of Oil and Industry is also operating a Handicrafts Centre which is endeavouring to encourage these crafts, train families therein and encourage them to market their products. The Bahrain Training Institute, which is run by the Ministry of Labour and Social Affairs, also trains large numbers of students in many of the skills required by the labour market.

(b) The number of day-care centres for children under three years of age in Bahrain has been increased to 46 in order to accommodate a larger number of children.

(c) More social centres have been established and provided with kindergartens and nurseries supervised by private associations. The Ministry is providing these associations with financial and technical support in order to encourage the establishment of associations concerned with children. A total of seven social centres are now operating in various parts of the country.

248. The Ministry is endeavouring to counsel families and help them to solve the problems that they encounter by organizing social guidance and counselling programmes, symposia and lectures in local communities, particularly on the subject of social education, family solidarity, the problems entailed by family break-ups, and the development of a sound sense of peaceful citizenship. It is also developing the productive family programme through the introduction of new fields to enable families to become more economically self-reliant instead of depending on the financial assistance that they receive.

G. Education, leisure and cultural activities

Education, including vocational training and guidance (art. 28)

249. In the State of Bahrain, the initial stages of education are free of charge to children from 6 to 17 years of age in accordance with article 7 of the Constitution, which stipulates that the State shall patronize the science, literature and the arts, shall encourage scientific research and shall ensure the availability of educational and cultural services for citizens. The State's education policy is based on two fundamental aims derived from the Constitution: (i) dissemination of education in order to make it easily available to persons of school age in all parts of the country; (ii) improvement of the quality and standard of education in order to more effectively meet the needs of students and the requirements of socio-economic development in the country.

250. Expenditure on education is one of the priorities in the policy that is being pursued by the Government of the State of Bahrain. In fact, the appropriations for recurrent expenditure on education account for more than 13 per cent of the State's general budget. The State supplies the

furniture, equipment, instruments and raw materials needed by schools and also provides students with school books free of charge. In addition, it meets the costs of transporting the students to and from their schools and provides them with health care and social and educational counselling.

251. The Ministry of Education is endeavouring to ensure that all schools are fully staffed with male and female teachers, including an adequate number of replacements to stand in for colleagues who are forced to absent themselves. The average pupil/teacher ratio at all academic levels is 15 pupils per teacher. Ministerial Ordinance No. 534/168-1/1992 promulgated in 1992 (see annex 12) stipulates that primary school teachers should give 22 classes per week and preparatory and secondary school teachers should give 20 classes per week. Male and female teachers enjoy the same terms and conditions of employment in regard to salary, appointment procedures, pupil quota, promotion and in-service training opportunities and professional support during their period of probation. The salary scale for male and female teaching staff differs from the public grade-based scale applied in the other Ministries of State in regard to salaries and annual increments.

252. Applicants for teaching posts must hold a university and a teaching qualification and must have passed the examination, which the Ministry of Education holds every year, in their field of specialization. The Ministry also organizes in-service vocational training programmes for teachers in their academic fields of specialization and in the latest educational developments in regard to teaching methods and techniques.

253. Article 28, paragraph 1 (a), of the Convention on the Rights of the Child stipulates that primary education should be made compulsory and available free to all. Article 7 of the Constitution of the State of Bahrain stipulates that education shall be compulsory and free of charge in the initial stages specified by law and in the manner provided for therein. The statistics on education show that, although compulsory education is not regulated by law, the school enrolment rate amounted to 95.6 per cent in 1996, which exceeds the target rate of 80 per cent set in the World Declaration on the Survival, Protection and Development of Children in the 1990s.

254. The educational structure in the State of Bahrain consists of four academic levels. The first is the pre-school level comprising private nursery schools, supervised by the Ministry of Labour and Social Affairs, and kindergartens supervised by the Ministry of Education. There are a total of 130 such establishments attended by about 14,800 male and female children in the age group 3-6 years in the case of kindergartens and under 3 years in the case of nursery schools.

255. The second level, which is the stage of basic education, comprises the following three academic cycles the curricula of which are selected and organized in the light of the development and age-related characteristics of the children.

(a) The first cycle

256. This covers the three lowest grades of primary education in which children enrol on reaching the age of 6 years. The philosophy of the grade teacher system, which is applied in this cycle, reflects the provisions of the Convention on the Rights of the Child, particularly in regard

to the need to make the child the focal point of the education process and to provide a stable school environment and a healthy atmosphere in which the child feels secure and loved, in which concern is shown for the child's integrated physical, spiritual, mental, psychological and social development and in which the child's aptitude to learn and to acquire knowledge, skills and beneficial healthy habits is developed. The maximum class density in this cycle is 30 pupils. The grade teacher system was introduced in Bahraini schools in the academic year 1983/84 within the context of the project for the extensive development of primary education, including the aims of education, educational curricula, teaching and evaluation methods, teacher training, school administration and the design of school buildings.

(b) The second cycle

257. This comprises the three higher grades of primary education in which children enjoy the environment and resources provided by the grade teacher system, with due regard for the requisite balance between academic specialization and overall educational experience. The primary schools apply the structural evaluation system to monitor the child's development, the aim of which is to ensure that the child attains a mastery of basic skills through teaching, diagnosis and further teaching, that slow learners receive individual attention and that outstanding pupils are encouraged through incentives to continue their education.

(c) The third cycle

258. The curriculum of this cycle, comprising the three preparatory grades, is being developed and harmonized with the curricula of the two preceding cycles. All pupils who have completed the second cycle of basic education are admitted to the third cycle.

259. The latest statistics indicate that 97 per cent of all children in the 6-15 age group are enrolled for basic education at government-run and private schools, the remainder being at private schools or institutions for disabled persons with special needs.

260. The third cycle is the stage of secondary education in which, in accordance with article 28, paragraph 1 (b), of the Convention, the State encourages the development of different forms of secondary education, including general and vocational training, makes them available and accessible to every child and takes appropriate measures such as the introduction of free education and the provision of financial assistance in case of need. During the last two decades, the State of Bahrain has shown great concern for secondary education in view of the interlinkage between its output and the requirements of ongoing social development. One of the principal recent innovations in secondary education in the State of Bahrain has been the subdivision of this stage of education into diversified streams with modernized curricula. For example, in addition to the science and arts branches of general education, secondary education in Bahrain comprises technical and vocational branches, commercial education and training in advertising and publicity and the textile and clothing trades, the latter two fields of training being intended for young women in order to give them an equal opportunity to enter the labour market and meet its needs for qualified personnel in these fields. During the academic year 1998/99, the distribution of male students in the various branches of secondary education was as follows: industry 27.44 per cent, science 26.40 per cent, commerce 22.19 per cent and arts 19.92 per cent.

During the same year, the corresponding distribution of female students was: science 40.43 per cent, arts 33.51 per cent, commerce 23.89 per cent and textiles/clothing/advertising and publicity 2.17 per cent.

261. The academic plan for the secondary level of education is based on the system of accredited hours, its academic courses being divided into four categories:

(a) Common courses: These diversified and integrated courses are designed to ensure that all students attain a minimum level of general culture by providing them with sufficient information, skills and guidance to help them to continue their self-education;

(b) Specialized courses: These are the courses that the student is obliged to attend in each branch;

(c) Optional specialized courses: These are intended to give a broader and deeper insight in a particular field of specialization or in a field that is related to another field of knowledge;

(d) Optional courses: These are intended to enrich the curriculum, satisfy the students' predelictions and propensities and achieve an integrated balance between the other basic and specialized courses.

262. The final stage of education is higher education which, in Bahrain, is diversified and provided at various institutions with differing fields of specialization and academic levels. This type of education, which is available at universities, colleges and intermediate institutes, lasts from two to four or more years. Bahrain has two universities, the University of Bahrain and the Arabian Gulf University, which have specialized programmes in engineering, business management, science, the arts, education and other fields of higher studies. The costs of the university education of outstanding Bahraini students are met by the State. The Arabian Gulf University, which is a university jointly operated by the States of the Gulf Cooperation Council, provides university education in the field of medicine and the medical sciences, as well as post-graduate courses in special education and technical studies, for students from the State of Bahrain, the Arabian Gulf States and other countries who meet the requirements for admission.

263. All students attending preparatory schools (grades 7-9) receive educational and vocational counselling to familiarize them with available secondary educational courses and present and future employment opportunities in the country and every student is given an opportunity to study subjects such as metalworking, carpentry, decoration, ceramics and the principles of design. Since the academic year 1999/2000, the principles of design and technology have been taught, on an experimental basis, as part of the syllabus for male and female students in the first cycle at some primary schools in order to endow them with the practical skills needed to think in a logical manner, solve problems, understand scientific applications and use them to design and fabricate useful original products that will give them an insight into working life and prepare them, from a young age, to participate therein in an effective and well-informed manner. Responsibility for the coordination of vocational guidance

is assigned to the school's social supervisor. Endeavours are being made to develop the methods and tools of vocational guidance at schools within the context of a wider concept of the promotion of vocational education at all academic levels.

264. In accordance with article 28, paragraph 1 (e), of the Convention, measures must be taken to encourage regular attendance at schools and reduce drop-out rates. In this connection, it should be noted that the Ministry of Education has made all the necessary endeavours to minimize drop-out rates, which do not exceed 0.02 per cent at the primary level, 1.9 per cent at the preparatory level and 3.86 per cent at the secondary level. The Ministry is aiming to gradually reduce these already low rates.

265. In accordance with article 28, paragraph 2, of the Convention, States parties must take all appropriate measures to ensure that school discipline is administered in a manner consistent with the child's human dignity and in conformity with the Convention. The Ministry of Education is endeavouring to enable schools to assume their full responsibilities, in collaboration with the home and local society, in order to provide children with a proper and balanced upbringing and education. It is doing so by improving the professional skills of teachers, social supervisors and administrators, conducting a periodic comprehensive review of the educational environment in schools and encouraging students to take part in school activities and student committees in order to promote the principles of participation, cooperation and respect for the views of others. The aim of the Code of School Discipline promulgated by the Minister of Education in Ordinance No. 549/168-1/92 (see annex 13) was to develop a feeling of responsibility among students, safeguard their dignity and rights and ensure justice and equality in disciplinary procedures which, inter alia, prohibit caning and corporal punishment in all schools. Students are given an opportunity to express their complaints and grievances through their school's governing body and the Department of Education and can also use the "hot line" to bring their questions, issues and problems to the attention of the Ministry of Education, from which they receive a direct response. In 1999, the Cabinet approved the establishment of parents' councils in all government-run schools.

266. Private education has helped to absorb about 23,000 male and female pupils at the stage of basic education. There are 132 nursery schools and kindergartens run by women's associations and the private sector (see annex 14), which help to prepare children for school entry. During the academic year 1997/98, there were about 10,020 male and female children enrolled at kindergartens, representing a proportion of 21.89 per cent of all male children and 24.73 per cent of all female children (see annex 15).

267. Private schools and kindergartens are supervised by the Department of Private Education in order to ensure the proper functioning of the educational process therein.

268. A training centre for female kindergarten teachers has been established, in cooperation with the Arab Gulf Programme and with support from UNICEF, to train those teachers to apply sound pedagogical principles. The Faculty of Education at the University of Bahrain has also opened a department to train female kindergarten teachers who, after graduating, are awarded an intermediate diploma. The first batch of teachers graduated in the academic year 1993/94. There are currently 48 national and foreign private schools at which more than 27,000 male and female students are enrolled.

269. Article 28, paragraph 3, of the Convention stipulates that States parties should promote and encourage international cooperation in matters relating to education with a view to contributing to the elimination of ignorance and illiteracy. The Ministry of Education is making all the necessary endeavours to increase the proportion of educated persons and reduce the illiteracy rate which, in the target age group 10-44 years, amounts to 5.38 per cent. The Ministry also offers ongoing education programmes through literacy centres in many Bahraini towns and villages.

Statistical indicators

270. According to the latest statistical indicators, the Government's endeavours in the field of education have achieved the following results:

In the academic year 1999/2000, there were 197 schools comprising 3,837 classes, the average density of which was 30 pupils. The number of male and female pupils enrolled in that year amounted to 115,349;

The enrolment rate at general secondary schools was 85 per cent;

The enrolment rate for children at the primary level was 100 per cent;

The State is encouraging and supervising private education. In the academic year 1999/2000, there were 48 private schools, of which 18 were national and 30 foreign, at which 27,846 male and female students were enrolled. About 6.5 per cent of the total number of Bahraini students in the country were enrolled for private education.

271. As a result of the intensive endeavours that the Government of the State of Bahrain has made to eliminate illiteracy, the illiteracy rate declined from 52.9 per cent in 1971 to 12 per cent in 1996, in which year it amounted to about 5.38 per cent in the age group 10-44 years.

Aims of education (art. 29)

272. The education policy of the Ministry of Education is based on the following two fundamental aims derived from the spirit and provisions of the Constitution:

(a) Dissemination of education in order to make it easily available to persons of school age in all parts of the country;

(b) Improvement of the quality and standard of education in order to more effectively meet the needs of students and the requirements of socio-economic development in the country.

273. In keeping with this education policy, the Ministry of Education has intensified its endeavours to develop its education system by:

Training administrative personnel to formulate efficient and comprehensive plans and take sound decisions conducive to the smooth functioning of the education

process at all levels, even in remote areas, and providing the services needed to help them to reform and modernize education;

Enabling the school administration to attain the level of competence needed to help it to exercise an appropriate degree of technical and pedagogical autonomy in order to be able to assume and effectively develop its educational responsibilities and improve the standard of general performance at schools, and by training senior administrators to carry out field research and planning tasks;

Developing, documenting and modernizing an efficient education information system linked to the State's other information systems;

Developing the research skills of persons working in the education sector and establishing an educational and functional research unit in the central administration;

Improving the efficiency of the teaching staff at schools by studying the present qualifications of male and female teachers and proposing appropriate programmes for the ongoing development of their professional skills;

Promoting confidence in the teacher, enhancing his social status and giving him wider scope to play his new role as a basic participant in all aspects of the educational process;

Reviewing the regulations and ordinances in order to give schools greater freedom to take initiatives and speed up the reform and modernization of education;

Endeavouring to secure the promulgation of the laws and legislation needed to enforce compulsory basic education;

Continuing to develop school curricula and educational and evaluation processes at the basic and secondary stages of education and conducting studies, research and pilot experiments in connection with aspects of the curricula, such as school books, educational materials, teaching methods, tools for structural diagnostic evaluation and activities to achieve the aims of the curricula;

Endeavouring to link the school to the environment, which constitutes a fundamental component in the educational process;
Continuing to promote technical and vocational education, link it to working life and encourage its adaptation to the current needs of the country's industrial and commercial institutions in order to enable it to meet the country's requirements for skilled manpower in various occupational fields;

Intensifying endeavours to promote ongoing adult education and, in particular, to combat illiteracy, in such a way as to provide everyone with better ongoing opportunities for education in order to eliminate illiteracy;

Adopting a comprehensive and flexible position in regard to international educational developments and attempting to derive optimum benefit therefrom in a manner compatible with the cultural characteristics of society;

Developing school premises by studying their current status, defining the specifications and criteria needed to ensure that they are used in a more adaptable and flexible manner consistent with the requirements for the ongoing development of the educational process, and continuing to conduct research with a view to further improvement of the educational environment in and outside the school;

Ensuring more effective supervision of private educational establishments by the Ministry of Education with a view to monitoring all aspects of the educational process.

274. In the light of the provisions of the country's Constitution and the education policy that has been formulated pursuant thereto, and in accordance with article 3 of the Education Act of 1989, the aims of education have been defined as follows:

To enable and assist every individual to develop his aptitudes, abilities, skills and propensities in order to achieve a better quality of human life through cooperation in the fields of work and employment;

To promote the optimum integrated physical, emotional, mental, social, moral and spiritual development of each individual within the community, with due regard for individual differences in order to ensure the advancement of the weak and the disabled and the ongoing advancement of those who are talented and already developed;

To enhance the ability of the individual to think in a critical manner and to make, and properly apply, sound judgements;

To inculcate the Islamic faith, affirming its contribution to integrated individual personality, family cohesion and social unity and solidarity, and highlighting its role as a comprehensive mode of life, its suitability for every time and place and its ability to keep pace with the requirements of the modern age;

To foster a deep sense of pride in belonging to the Arab and Islamic nations through full awareness of the Arab and Islamic intellectual heritage and its historic role in the development of human civilization and the advancement of science and the arts, and through an understanding of the constituents and the potential of the Arab nation and its ability to achieve progress and unity and contribute to the development of human civilization;

To understand the close links between the Arabian Gulf States, their developmental requirements, the challenges with which they are faced, the endeavours that they are making to promote mutual cooperation and integration, and their role in the fulfilment of the aspirations of the Arab and Islamic nations;

To enable the individual to contribute to scientific and technological progress and benefit from its fruits by making it indigenous, adapting it to his advantage, strengthening its humanitarian and independent nature and encouraging an open-minded approach to other human cultures in order to benefit from their experiences;

To enable the individual to use his leisure time profitably in voluntary social work and cultural, scientific and sports activities and to enjoy the arts and literature, in addition to encouraging him to participate in cooperative community life;

To enable society to achieve socio-economic progress by meeting its quantitative and qualitative requirements for skilled national manpower capable of work, production, research and creative innovation;

To contribute to the development of a fully integrated, educated and productive society and the achievement of cultural enrichment by providing all citizens, young and old, male and female, with opportunities for self-advancement through the system of formal and informal education;

To develop awareness of the characteristics of the environment and the human heritage and ways to ensure their preservation and proper utilization;

To develop the concepts of education for peace, a better future for mankind and international cooperation and solidarity based on justice, equality, mutual respect and cultural interaction among all States and peoples.

275. In keeping with the philosophy of the grade teacher system, which is applied in primary education and under which the child is regarded as the focal point and objective of the educational process, the academic plan is based on organization of teaching and learning activities with a view to developing the child's personality with due regard, wherever possible, for the child's particularities and independence, diversification of the sources of learning within the class environment and application of the structural evaluation system linked to the skills that a student is expected to master, as stipulated in the Regulations Concerning Evaluation in Basic Education of 1994 (see annex 16). This gives every child an opportunity to learn in accordance with his or her capacity and potential, without the need for comparison with others, thereby endowing him or her with a feeling of confidence and a desire to learn.

276. In view of the importance of awareness of human rights, this subject has been incorporated in the academic curricula in a manner consistent with the academic level of each student, particularly in the religious education, national education and family education syllabuses, in which reference is made to the responsibilities of the individual towards his family, his society, his country and the world.

277. As a token of respect for the right of the child to acquire his or her culture and learn his or her mother tongue, the State of Bahrain allows immigrant communities to establish their own educational institutions that provide appropriate tuition in their culture in order to facilitate

integration in educational institutions in their home country, on the condition that the students also receive an appropriate amount of knowledge concerning the history, geography and national culture of Bahrain.

278. The Ministry of Education, being aware of the great importance of knowledge concerning the need to preserve and develop the natural environment, incorporated environmental education in the academic curricula a long time ago. It also diligently organizes educational and cultural activities to give students a more thorough understanding of their environment and endow them with skills and attitudes that help them to adopt a proper approach to the environment.

279. Since the teacher is the cornerstone in the educational development process, the vocational development of teachers is accorded high priority in the education policy of the State of Bahrain. This concern for the teaching profession begins at the pre-service stage and is illustrated by the academic and educational requirements for entry into the profession and the criteria for the selection of the best candidates. In view of the importance of the vocational development of teachers, the Ministry of Education uses various ways and means to ensure effective ongoing vocational development, including short- and long-term training programmes in fields of specialization, teaching strategies and techniques and annual conferences for each academic level, at which teachers present working papers, attend lectures and discussions and prepare proposals and recommendations. The learning resource centres for teachers, which are organized and run by the teachers themselves, also constitute effective channels for the ongoing development of teachers and tools for the practice of cooperation and the learning of skills in the fields of leadership, dialogue, discipline and initiative, which are essential to enable educational institutions and their staff to achieve the educational goals which are in conformity with the provisions of the Convention on the Rights of the Child.

280. In order to ensure that academic curricula cover the latest scientific developments and show due regard for socio-economic changes, they are subject to constant review in the light of field evaluations and studies of the observations made by teachers, students, specialists in the formulation of curricula and other persons concerned with education and its linkage to the needs of society so that it can make a constructive contribution to the development of the personalities of children and young persons, endow them with the systematic thinking skills needed to face contemporary changes and encourage them to adopt the values of cooperation, tolerance and initiative.

281. The Ministry of Education has completed the implementation of the project for the development of industrial secondary education and is about to begin the comprehensive development of commercial secondary education in collaboration with the country's labour and production institutions. Practical steps are also being taken to review basic education and formulate concepts for its development in a manner consistent with future requirements and challenges.

282. Being eager to provide a proper educational environment, the Ministry ensures that educational institutions in the State of Bahrain are designed, constructed and equipped in accordance with approved technical specifications that are reviewed periodically in the light of the findings of evaluation exercises. The specifications cover the engineering, technical, health

and educational requirements appropriate to the ages of the students in each academic cycle and stage. The Ministry of Education is also planning to conduct a periodic and comprehensive internal and external evaluation of its educational institutions in the light of quality-related specifications and criteria.

283. The Ministry of Education, wishing to develop and modernize its curricula in a manner consistent with the most recent innovations, has installed computers and the Internet in all secondary schools and has also introduced new courses and fields of specialization to meet the needs and requirements of the labour market.

Leisure, recreation and cultural activities (art. 31)

284. The Ministry of Education organizes numerous cultural and recreational activities for students at all educational levels both during and outside school hours. These activities, which help students to occupy their leisure time in a positive manner beneficial to themselves and to their society and local environment, include the following:

Cultural and scientific lectures at schools;

Workshops on ways to develop creative skills, first aid, etc.;

Establishment of various student committees and associations, such as the Anti-Smoking Committee, the Committee to Promote the Economic Use of Electricity and Water at School, the Committee on the Joint Exhibition of School Products and the School Library Committee;

Organization of student visits to museums and scientific centres;

Participation in committees and activities of the Scout Movement;

Organization of cultural, scientific and recreational competitions in fields such as poetry, oratory, music and painting;

Participation in local and regional scientific competitions.

285. Through its Student Affairs and Student Services Departments, the Ministry of Education encourages the establishment of student groups at schools to organize cultural and recreational activities, such as school artistic activities, exhibitions of children's paintings, literary expression competitions, school theatrical performances, the production of artistic publications and the organization of field visits.

286. The State also encourages cooperation and exchanges of services among the various institutions endeavouring to occupy the leisure time of children and young persons in a beneficial and useful manner. In this connection, the Ministry of Education is cooperating with *the Public Authority for Youth and Sport* by allowing schools to be used, during the summer holiday, as youth centres in which the younger generation can engage in cultural, sports and recreational activities.

287. The Ministry provides social and psychological counselling services in order to enable students to choose the academic courses most appropriate to their needs. It also organizes field visits to various places of work, such as companies, banks and hospitals, and arranges meetings between students and senior professionals in various occupational sectors, such as engineers, physicians, accountants, etc.

288. The Ministry of Education, in collaboration with the Ministry of Health, organizes first aid courses in schools and makes arrangements with health centres to provide schools with the necessary medicines, to monitor the condition of sick students and to supervise the coating of their teeth with a substance that protects them against cavities and decay.

289. The Ministry of Education is endeavouring to play a more active scientific and cultural role through public libraries by providing students with various sources of knowledge and encouraging them to read and engage in purposeful research.

290. In addition to the leisure, recreational and cultural activities available at cultural centres, scientific clubs, sports grounds and public parks, the State is also encouraging the private sector to act as a partner in the provision of recreational, leisure and cultural facilities and services for children under the supervision and control of the State agencies concerned. It is also encouraging that sector to establish recreational halls in all parts of the country. In addition, the cinemas that have been established throughout the country screen suitably selected films for children.

291. The Ministry of Education shows special concern for all modern types and forms of physical education and sports activities, which constitute an important component of general education and make a fundamental contribution to the physical, social, mental and psychological training and development of citizens. Scout and Girl Guide activities are also strongly encouraged in view of the role that they play in the development of upright citizens.

292. In this connection, the Sports Education, Scouting and Girl Guide Department organizes numerous activities in the following fields:

Sports education

On the conclusion of its annual sports tournaments, the Department holds a closing ceremony, presided over by the Minister of Education, at which it reviews the most outstanding activities and achievements, presents awards to winning schools, honours pathfinders in the Scout Movement who have received top-ranking badges of merit from the Secretariat of the Gulf Cooperation Council, distributes shields and certificates to the winning schools and honours Scout and Girl Guide leaders;
Numerous programmes and activities are implemented under the Department's annual plan, which includes sports competitions for all educational levels;

During the academic year 1998/99, certificates of merit were introduced for outstanding schools at all educational levels in order to encourage them to show greater interest in, and make careful preparations for, the sports activities that are organized by the Department;

Various types of sports competitions have been introduced in girls' schools in order to enable them to effectively play their natural role by enabling their students to demonstrate their abilities in various sports activities;

Highly sophisticated methods have been adopted to ensure that the results of the competitive physical fitness championship are calculated in record time and distributed on schedule to the participating schools;

The training centres focus on gymnastics, ballet and taekwondo as the best means to develop a taste for sport through diversified activities;

A number of sports clubs and federations are coordinating their endeavours to ensure the success of their development programmes and the proper selection and sponsoring of talented sportsmen in order to establish a foundation for individual and team sports.

Local courses and assemblies

The Department holds an annual general assembly of male and female sports teachers, as well as a special assembly for newly recruited male and female teachers in order to explain the Department's regulations, the working relationship between the Department and school administrations and any other matters relating to sports education;

The refresher courses that are organized for male and female umpires of school sports have been attended by a large number of sports teachers. One-week training courses have also been organized for umpires officiating at the competitive physical fitness championship;

The Department has also organized meetings to explain recent developments in matters of concern to sports instructors and umpires.

Scouting

Annual Scout competitions are organized to form a group of young researchers and train them for the future. The competitions cover Scout training methods, scientific research and the role of Scouts at the national level;

The Cub Festival, which is held every year, includes competitions, selected games and entertainment activities;

Numerous Scout camps are organized every year in order to implement Scout programmes, particularly the outdoor, venture and discovery programmes;

The Scout programme also includes field visits to institutions and companies for fact-finding and other useful purposes and training courses are organized for Scout leaders in order to familiarize them with the latest developments in the field of scouting;

The Ministry of Education arranges for its Scouts to participate in numerous local annual activities and events, such as the celebration of National Day and the campaign to clean up the coasts in collaboration with the official and private bodies concerned.

Girl Guides

Bahrain's Girl Guides participate actively in numerous national, Gulf and Arab annual camps;

Girl Guides distribute leaflets and posters explaining the harmful effects of smoking to mothers and housewives at their homes in order to make them better informed. In this connection, two symposia have been held under the slogan "Refrain from smoking for a better life";

Bahrain's Girl Guides also take part in the celebration of Arab Towns Day on 15 March of every year;

Bahrain's Girl Guides participate in the international campaign to clean up the coasts, which has been supervised by the Washington-based Center for Marine Conservation since 1985. They also participate in the international "Clean World" campaign, which is based in Sydney, Australia;

Girl Guides take part in the ongoing symposium entitled "The Role of Clubs and Associations in Solving the Household Garbage Problem", which is organized by the Youth and Environment Association in collaboration with the Central Municipal Authority, with a view to forming a "friends of the environment" group to participate in environmental protection and conservation activities.

Special education and the welfare of students with special needs

(a) The welfare of disabled students in government-run schools

293. The Ministry of Education's approach to the welfare of disabled students is based on the principle of the integration of disabled persons with special needs in ordinary school classes, with due regard for their various types of disability. In accordance with the basic objectives of the philosophy of education which the State of Bahrain has adopted and which are based on respect for the rights of the child and the welfare and social integration of disabled persons, the Ministry has been implementing a pilot project for the integration of disabled children in ordinary classes since 1992 and specialized teachers have been trained to deal with this category of students in order to ensure the project's success. The project has been expanded to cover 43 per cent of the government-run primary schools. Through its departments concerned, the Ministry of Education also organizes ongoing workshops to train male and female teachers in ways to deal with, and develop the abilities of, students suffering from various forms of disability. In addition, the Ministry is installing escalators and ramps in schools to facilitate the movement of students with physical disabilities.

294. The Ministry of Education, in collaboration with the public and private institutions concerned with the disabled, provides rehabilitation and training services for disabled students with special needs. All blind children are enrolled at the Bahraini-Saudi Institute for education from the primary to the preparatory levels and deaf children are enrolled at specialized centres for the education of the deaf and dumb. Children with learning difficulties or mental disabilities, such as minor or severe mental retardation, are also enrolled at specialized institutes.

(b) Encouragement of outstanding and gifted students

295. In addition to the prizes and incentives that it offers to gifted students, the State awards grants and scholarships to outstanding students in all fields so that they can continue their higher studies at State expense. The Ministry also organizes competitions and exhibitions to honour successful students on all national occasions, such as Science Day, National Day, etc.

296. The Ministry of Education is endeavouring, through ongoing training workshops, to make primary and preparatory school teachers more familiar with ways to deal with outstanding and gifted students. These workshops include a special programme which explains the concept and needs of outstanding students, trains teachers to formulate special educational strategies for them and acquaints teachers with Arab and international experiences in this field.

297. In 1995, the Ministry established a Committee for the Encouragement of Outstanding and Gifted Students which, inter alia, adopted a definition of "outstanding and gifted student", specified the methods and criteria to be applied in order to identify such students, disseminated awareness concerning this matter among educationalists and formulated programmes to cater for the needs and develop the abilities of gifted students.

298. The Ministry's policies in this regard are based on the legislation, laws and ministerial ordinances which stress the importance of catering for gifted and outstanding students with special needs. For example, section 11 of the Education Act contains explicit provisions concerning gifted and outstanding students, including an article which stipulates that the Ministry of Education should cater for the needs of talented students by establishing special classes for them and by formulating appropriate curricula and programmes to nurture and develop their aptitudes and talents.

299. The Ministry is currently monitoring and supporting school experiments to cater for the needs of intellectually outstanding students by sending female teachers abroad for specialized training in intellectual talent and subsequently appointing them at primary schools in order to identify outstanding students on the basis of clearly defined criteria, organize advanced activities for them within the classroom, develop their thinking skills and monitor their educational and psychological needs. The Ministry is also selecting schools that are qualified for inclusion in the outstanding students' programme and is supplying them with the plans and materials needed to cater for the needs of such students. About 22 per cent of the government-run primary schools have plans and programmes for this category of students.

H. Special protection measures

Children in situations of emergency

Refugee children (art. 22)

300. Article 21 of the Constitution prohibits the extradition of political refugees. Accordingly, the State caters for the needs of political refugees and all members of their families and provides them with protection, social assistance and appropriate accommodation. Their children also benefit from all the health, educational, recreational and other services.

301. Through the Bahraini Red Crescent Society and other national associations, the State of Bahrain also provides humanitarian assistance for refugees in all parts of the world.

Children in armed conflicts (art. 38), including physical and psychological recovery and social reintegration (art. 39)

302. As already indicated, Legislative Decree No. 23 of 1979 regulating enlistment by individuals in the Bahraini Defence Force stipulates that recruits into the ranks must not be under 17 or over 35 years of age, except in the case of non-commissioned officers, technicians and specialized personnel who can be recruited from the age of 15 (as cadets) to the age of 40. It should be noted that there is no compulsory military service in the State of Bahrain.

303. The State of Bahrain is a party to the Geneva Conventions of 1949 and also to the two Additional Protocols thereto of 1977 relating to the protection of victims of international armed conflicts and of non-international armed conflicts.

304. In this connection, reference can be made to paragraphs 175 and following of this report concerning physical and psychological recovery and social reintegration of children.

Children in conflict with the law

The administration of juvenile justice (art. 40)

305. All aspects of the juvenile's situation are studied and endeavours are made to provide appropriate forms of treatment and protection. The juvenile judge, in collaboration with female social workers from the Women's Police Department at the Ministry of the Interior, endeavours to ensure that juveniles are placed in the Ministry's Juvenile Welfare Centre only when they cannot be reformed in their natural environment. Consequently, the number of juveniles who are placed in the Centre is small in relation to the number of juvenile delinquents and potential delinquents with whom the Department deals every year. In addition to the accommodation of inmates, the Centre's services include the monitoring of potential delinquents through contact with their families and their social environment. To this end, female sociologists pay field visits to the juvenile in his social environment in order to ensure that he is not isolated from his environment and the outside world.

306. The organizational structure of the Juvenile Police is headed by the Director-General of Criminal Investigation at the Ministry of the Interior, who is directly responsible for the Women's Police Department which supervises the offices of the Women's Police in the Security Departments of the various regions as well as the Juvenile Social Welfare Unit and the Juvenile Welfare Centre.

307. Every office of the Women's Police in the Security Departments of the various regions is supervised by a female officer specialized in the social sciences and assisted by a team of policewomen who have received training in the social sciences and ways to deal with juveniles. The Juvenile Social Welfare Unit is likewise headed by a similarly qualified and assisted female officer.

308. In the police stations and the Juvenile Welfare Centre, juveniles are dealt with by a policewoman trained in psychology, social research, juvenile and child welfare and moral and social counselling. Ongoing refresher courses are held for the Women's Police in order to enable them to continue to discharge their functions in a competent manner and the Women's Police Department is keen to ensure that its officers and policewomen attend local courses, symposia and workshops on children in order to gain further expertise in ways to deal with juveniles, rectify their conduct and protect them from the dangers of delinquency.

309. Responsibility for juvenile delinquents and potential delinquents is shared by the Women's Police Department and the Ministry of Labour and Social Affairs. Social workers from the Department monitor juvenile delinquents and potential delinquents at their homes and schools and attempt to provide them and their families with the assistance needed to prevent their relapse into delinquency.

310. In addition to the above, and further to the details concerning juvenile welfare contained in paragraph 32.5 of this report, in 1984 the Ministry of the Interior expanded the facilities available at the Juvenile Welfare Centre, which was established in 1971, to include most of the services needed by its juvenile inmates, whose social, psychological, educational and vocational welfare is assured by female sociologists, psychologists and teachers specialized in various fields of education and vocational training. The sociologists endeavour to ensure that the juvenile is not isolated from his environment or the outside world by allowing him to spend weekends and holidays with his family if his family is willing and able to receive him. The juvenile's families are also encouraged to visit them at the Centre in order to gain an insight into their activities.

311. The aims of this Juvenile Welfare Centre, which is run by the Ministry of the Interior, are as follows:

(a) To cater for the welfare of juvenile delinquents by providing them with all the social, psychological, health and educational services needed to help them to overcome the root causes of their delinquency, and also by strengthening the links between the juvenile and his family, promoting a close relationship between the Centre's staff and the juvenile's family and providing the assistance needed to enable the latter to receive the juvenile and ensure his welfare after his departure from the Centre;

(b) To cater for the welfare of potential juveniles who, due to their lack of a reliable provider capable of ensuring their welfare, tend to lead a life of vagrancy, loitering in the streets, mixing with criminals and delinquents and sleeping away from home for long periods of time.

312. Juvenile delinquents or potential delinquents who are admitted to the Centre for purposes of further investigation or pending their appearance before the juvenile court are placed in a separate wing of the Centre in order to prevent them from committing an act of delinquency, prior to the date set for their trial, as a result of their environmental circumstances, their vagrancy or their habit of sleeping in the streets or frequenting criminals and delinquents.

313. The Centre receives male and female juveniles under 15 years of age and, in 1998, accommodated a total of 300 juveniles (see annex 17). During the same year, the number of cases referred to the Centre amounted to 39 (see annex 18).

314. The Centre provides two types of care for juveniles:

(a) Alternative care, which is provided by the Centre's female sociologists who formulate a treatment plan for each juvenile placed therein by the juvenile court after studying the various aspects of the juvenile's social circumstances and behavioural patterns. This treatment plan is implemented, through the various programmes organized for the juvenile during his stay at the Centre, in collaboration with all the persons responsible for the educational, cultural, recreational and medical care programmes.

(b) After-care for juvenile delinquents, the programmes of which begin as soon as the juvenile is admitted to the Centre with a view to strengthening his links with his family and preparing his family to receive him after his departure from the Centre. The female sociologist assigned to the juvenile's case at that time visits him at his home, his school or his place of work once every two weeks in order to check on his situation and attempt to solve any problems that he has encountered and which might impede his social adaptation. After six months of monitoring, if the sociologist finds that the juvenile has settled well in his environment, she reduces the frequency of her visits to once every month for a period of three months and, thereafter, to once every two months until such time as she is fully satisfied that the juvenile will maintain his good conduct.

Children deprived of their liberty, including any form of arrest, detention or imprisonment (art. 37 (b), (c) and (d))

315. The social defence legislation takes into account the fact children, being born without the ability to distinguish between right and wrong, cannot be held criminally responsible for their acts until their mental faculties gradually become fully developed. Accordingly, under the criminal law, children are subject to special regulations such as those contained in the provisions of the Juveniles Act No. 17 of 1976 which stipulates, in particular, that a young child cannot be regarded as an offender but merely as a socially endangered person requiring reform and protection from engagement in further acts of delinquency in order to safeguard society from the manifestations of the threat that he poses.

316. The aim of the legislature is therefore to deter the child, in a manner consistent with his age, through protection, education, reform and rehabilitation. Instead of prescribing penalties similar to those to which adult offenders are liable, the law merely recommends the precautionary measures provided for in article 6 of the said Act which range from a reprimand to placement in a welfare institution or a specialized hospital. The principle on which these regulations concerning juveniles are based is that, in the absence of criminal responsibility, a child cannot be regarded as an offender, being merely a potential offender in the circumstances referred to in article 2 of the Act and, consequently, instead of being punished, should be subjected only to the precautionary measures provided for in article 6 thereof. In order to ensure the full protection of juveniles, the law stipulates that juvenile cases can be adjudicated only by the juvenile court established under the terms of Ordinance No. 5 of 1976 promulgated by the Minister of Justice and Islamic Affairs on 8 April 1976 (see annex 19). With a view to broadening the scope of the protection accorded to juveniles, Ordinance No. 16 of 1976 promulgated by the Minister of the Interior dealt with the phenomenon of begging, which is one aspect of the social endangerment of juveniles (see annex 20).

317. Since article 20 of the Constitution stipulates that there is no crime or punishment except as defined by law, it is prohibited to subject an accused person to physical or mental harm. Article 24 of the Juveniles Act prohibits the placement of a juvenile in preventive detention. If the circumstances of the case require his placement in protective custody, the court may order delivery of the juvenile into the custody of one of his parents or a legal or testamentary guardian or, if any of them is unfit to undertake his proper upbringing, into the custody of a competent member of his family. In the absence of such a family member, a juvenile must be placed in the custody of a person of good reputation who can be relied upon to bring him up properly, or a trustworthy family the provider of which is willing to assume responsibility for his welfare and to ensure his appearance before the authorities whenever so required.

318. The human dignity of every child deprived of liberty is respected in a manner consistent with the child's age.

319. Article 32 of the Juveniles Act stipulates that the juvenile must be informed of every measure or judgement concerning him and notification thereof must also be given to one of the juvenile's parents, his guardian or the person responsible for him, who have the right to institute appeal proceedings, in the juvenile's interests, in the legally prescribed manner. Article 41 of the said Act further stipulates that juveniles are not required to pay any court fees in respect of proceedings brought under the terms of the Juveniles Act.

Sentencing of juveniles including, in particular, the prohibition of capital punishment or life imprisonment (art. 37 (a))

320. As already indicated, article 70 of the Penal Code of 1976 designates the young age of an accused person over 15 but under 18 years of age as a mitigating circumstance. Under the terms of article 71 of the Code, if a mitigating circumstance is established in a case involving an offence punishable by capital punishment, the penalty must be reduced to imprisonment or detention for a period of not less than one year and, if the offence is punishable by imprisonment for life or for a fixed term, it must be reduced to the penalty for a misdemeanour, unless

otherwise specified in the Code. Reference has also already been made to article 19 of the Constitution, which stipulates that no one shall be subjected to physical or mental torture.

Physical and psychological recovery and social reintegration (art. 39)

321. Reference has already been made, in paragraph 35 of this report, to the appropriate measures that the competent authorities in the State of Bahrain are taking to promote rehabilitation in an environment conducive to the child's health and respect for the child's dignity.

Children in situations of exploitation, including physical and psychological recovery and social reintegration

Economic exploitation, including child labour (art. 32)

322. The employment of juveniles is dealt with in section VIII of the Private Sector Employment Act of 1976, which prohibits the employment of young persons of either sex who are under 14 years of age. The Act makes the employment of young persons conditional on the fulfilment of a number of requirements. For example, they must obtain authorization from the Ministry of Labour and Social Affairs, they must undergo a medical examination prior to their entry into service and at periodic intervals thereafter and they must not be employed in industries or occupations that are hazardous or detrimental to their health.

323. The Act prohibits the employment of juveniles during the night-time period, on overtime or for more than six hours per day. They must be granted annual leave of not less than a full month, which they are not permitted to renounce or postpone. This protection was further consolidated by the State of Bahrain's accession, under the terms of Decree No. 8 of 1998, to Arab Labour Convention No. 18 of 1996 concerning the employment of juveniles.

324. The employment of vocationally rehabilitated disabled persons is regulated in section IV of the Act, which defines the term "disabled person", explains the nature of vocational rehabilitation and stipulates that vocationally rehabilitated disabled persons must be employed in private sector institutions and companies and in governmental Ministries and agencies.

325. It is noteworthy that various governmental agencies and private sector institutions are showing considerable concern for the rehabilitation and employment of disabled persons in view of the emphasis that the State is placing on the right of disabled persons to obtain employment consistent with their abilities and potential in order to enable them to contribute to the socio-economic development process and integrate in society. To this end, the State, with support and assistance from the private sector, has established numerous welfare and rehabilitation institutions for the disabled in order to rehabilitate and train them in various crafts and professions so that they can have access to the labour market. The State has also decided that they should be granted numerous privileges and incentives.

326. In appreciation of the fact that disabled persons, being faced with special circumstances, require exceptional protection and extra care within the context of socio-economic development plans, the State of Bahrain has acceded to Arab Labour Conventions Nos. 17 of 1993,

concerning the rehabilitation and employment of disabled persons, and 159 of 1983, concerning the vocational rehabilitation of disabled persons, with a view to expanding the scope of the privileges granted to this category of the population.

327. In order to provide full protection in this regard, section V of the Labour Code defines an "apprentice" as any person who has contracted to work for an enterprise in order to learn a trade or profession by working under the supervision of his employer, during a specified period of time, in return for a wage or remuneration.

328. The Labour Code also contains a number of regulations, known as the "protective regulations", the aim of which is to ensure the welfare of mothers and their children. These regulations make provision for maternity leave, specify the wage payable during such periods of leave and prohibit the dismissal of working mothers during their pre- and post-natal maternity leave.

329. This clearly shows that the Labour Code recognizes the special status of pregnant workers and the need to show them due consideration during pregnancy and childbirth and while they are nursing their children in order to enable them to fulfil their maternal duties. Accordingly, the Code prohibits their employment in forms of work that would affect their health or the health of their unborn children and grants them 45 days' maternity leave on full pay, plus an additional 15 days' leave without pay.

330. The State of Bahrain has also acceded to International Labour Convention No. 14, concerning the application of the weekly rest in industrial undertakings, and Arab Labour Convention No. 15 of 1983, concerning wage fixing and protection.

Illicit use of narcotic drugs (art. 33)

331. Act No. 4 of 1973, which regulates the circulation and use of narcotic substances and preparations in the State of Bahrain, prescribes the death penalty or a penalty of life imprisonment and a fine for anyone who:

Imports or exports narcotic substances or preparations without a licence;

Cultivates, produces or manufactures narcotic substances or preparations with a view to trafficking therein;

Possesses, purchases, sells, offers for consumption, or facilitates the consumption of, narcotic substances or preparations.

332. It should be noted that the Penal Code regards the youthful age of an accused person over 15 but under 18 years of age as a mitigating circumstance in the event of his commission of an offence insofar as, in such a case, he benefits from a lesser penalty.

333. The State of Bahrain has acceded to the following international and regional conventions to combat the traffic in narcotic drugs:

The Single Convention on Narcotic Drugs of 1961, as amended by the General Protocol of 1972;

The Convention on Psychotropic Substances of 1971;

The United Nations Convention against Illicit Traffic in Narcotic Drugs and Psychotropic Substances of 1988;

The Arab Convention against Illicit Traffic in Narcotic Drugs of 1994.

Sexual exploitation and sexual abuse (art. 34)

334. The Bahraini Penal Code of 1976 contains a separate chapter, entitled "Debauchery and Prostitution", on the protection of individuals, including children, from all forms of sexual exploitation. The Code prescribes a penalty of detention for anyone who:

In any way incites or helps a male or female to commit an act of debauchery or prostitution;

Induces a male or female to commit an act of prostitution through coercion, threat or deception;

Protects a person engaged in debauchery or prostitution;

Establishes or manages, or in any way assists in the establishment or management of, premises for debauchery or prostitution.

335. In this connection, it should be noted that the Code designates the youthful age of an accused person over 15 but under 18 years of age as a mitigating circumstance in regard to the penalty (art. 70). In contrast, however, the youthful age of the victim in offences involving rape or indecent acts is regarded as an aggravating circumstance that warrants a more severe penalty for the offender (arts. 344 et. seq. of the Penal Code).

The abduction of, sale of, or traffic in children (art. 35)

336. Chapter VII, section 2, of the Penal Code is devoted to offences against the family and prescribes penalties for the abduction, concealment or substitution of newborn infants or refusal to hand over a child to the person to whom the child's custody has been awarded. It also covers the offences of kidnapping children, exposing them to danger and inciting them to engage in prostitution and prescribes heavier penalties for offences in which the victims are children.

Other forms of exploitation (art. 36)

337. The State of Bahrain believes that it is very important to ensure that children are properly brought up, educated in lofty religious values and provided with care and that the requisite legislation is promulgated to regulate all aspects of their protection from all forms of harmful exploitation.

338. In this connection, it should be noted that the competent authorities in the State of Bahrain are constantly reviewing the legislation on children in order to make appropriate recommendations to consolidate the achievements that have been made in the field of child welfare.

Children belonging to a minority or an indigenous group (art. 30)

339. The Bahraini people are of Arab origin and all the country's citizens and foreign residents live in an environment characterized by firmly established policies and practices that ensure a decent life for all.

Conclusion

340. While submitting this report to the distinguished Committee on the Rights of the Child, the Government of the State of Bahrain looks forward to beginning an ongoing and constructive dialogue with it in furtherance of the endeavours that are being made to highlight the importance of the upbringing and education of children in such a way as to ensure their optimum development in all respects so that they can become upright citizens and instruments for cultural and human contact between the generations, enjoying protection from all forms of exploitation to which they might be subjected.

341. The State of Bahrain wishes the distinguished Committee continued success in the discharge of its functions and, in its future reports, will endeavour to provide additional information so that the Committee can continue to monitor the achievements made in regard to the protection of the rights of the child.

List of annexes*

A. Legislative texts transmitted to the Committee's secretariat

1. The Constitution of the State of Bahrain.

2. Legislative enactments:

The Organization of the Judiciary Act of 1971, as amended.

The Juveniles Act of 1976.

The Bahraini Penal Code, as amended.

The Code of Criminal Procedure of 1966, as amended.

The Law of Evidence in Civil and Commercial Matters of 1996.

The Commercial Code of 1987, as amended.

The Code of Civil Procedure of 1970.

The Guardianship of Property Act of 1986.

The Bahraini Nationality Act of 1963, as amended.

The Private Sector Employment Act, as amended.

The text of articles 2 and 3 of the Act regulating enlistment by individuals in the Bahraini Defence Force.

The Private Educational and Training Institutions Act of 1998.

The Registration of Births and Deaths Regulatory Act of 1970, as amended.

The Passports Act No. 11 of 1975, as amended.

The Central Population Registry Act of 1984.

The Social and Cultural Associations and Clubs and Private Youth and Sports Organizations and Institutions Act.

The Cooperative Associations Act No. 8 of 1972.

---

* The annexes are available for consultation in the files of the secretariat.

The Social Insurance Act, as amended.

Act No. 4 of 1973, regulating the circulation and use of narcotic substances and preparations.

B. Texts, ordinances and statistics annexed to the report*

1. Non-Bahraini population, disaggregated by nationality group and duration of residence, in 1991.

2. Age structure of the population in 1998.

3. Fertility, birth and mortality rates for the period 1994-1998.

4. Labour force estimates for 1998.

5. Cabinet Decision No. 15 of 1999 establishing the National Committee on Childhood.

6. Legal provisions regulating the recovery of child maintenance.

7. Ordinance No. 22 of 1995, concerning the social assistance scheme, promulgated by the Minister for Labour and Social Affairs.

8. Birth statistics in the State of Bahrain for the period 1994-1998.

9. Public health indicators for 1998.

10. Legislative Decree No. 21 of 1996 concerning the environment.

11. Total population and number of disabled persons (under 20 years of age) and the proportion of disabled persons per 1,000 of the population, according to the 1991 census.

12. Ordinance No. 534/168-1/1992, promulgated by the Minister of Education, regulating school rosters in order to ensure an equal quota of weekly classes.

13. Ordinance No. 549/168-1/1992, promulgated by the Minister of Education, concerning the Code of School Discipline.

14. Number of schools, classes and students in the private education system, by type of school, in the academic year 1997/98.

15. Enrolment rates in kindergartens in the academic year 1997/98.

---

* The annexes are available for consultation in the files of the secretariat.

16. The Regulations Concerning Evaluation in Basic Education of 1994.

17. Number of juveniles accommodated at the Ministry of the Interior's Juvenile Welfare Centre in 1998, by age group.

18. Number of cases referred to the Ministry of the Interior's Juvenile Welfare Centre during the period 1994-1998.

19. Ordinance No. 5 of 1976, promulgated by the Minister of Justice and Islamic Affairs, establishing the Juvenile Court.

20. Ordinance No. 16 of 1976, promulgated by the Minister of the Interior, prohibiting begging.